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11

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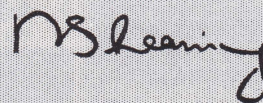
This is our sixth issue since **Australian Realms** made its return: one year on and we are still here despite some of the doubters. A lot of this is due to the great support that you have given us. Now we are offering readers the chance to further shape the destiny of the magazine by asking you *all* to participate in the **Readers Poll** that we have included in this issue.

We want as many people as possible to return their poll forms, and if there is not sufficient room on the form to include all your comments, we encourage you to attach a letter as well. The results of the poll will not only be printed in an upcoming issue, they will also go a long way to improving the content and form of the magazine to best suit the needs and wants of you all. I urge you to take the time now to either cut out or photocopy page 37, answer all the questions, and post it to us.

Oh, and if having a positive influence on Australia's greatest role play gaming magazine isn't enough inducement, we are also offering over \$250.00 worth of prizes to one lucky respondent. It is very important to us that you have your say, so I look forward to hearing from you all very soon.

Thanks for staying with us for this first hectic year... but look out because next year holds many more exciting new developments.

See you there.



Nick Leaning
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Thanks go out to White Wolf for supplying the Werewolf posters. And for the past twelve months, special thanks go to: Karen for the belief, love and support; to Colin for the inspiration and help; to Mike for the advice and encouragement; and to all of you who have bought and read Australian Realms. We promise much more to come!

Reviews

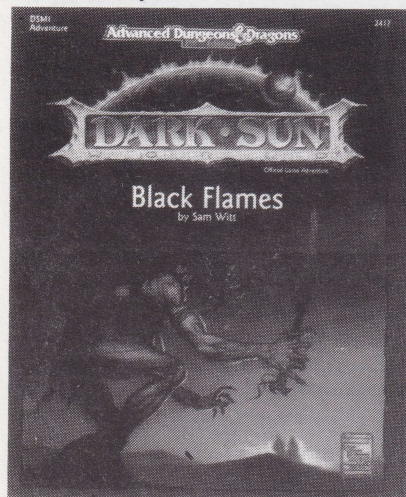
BLACK FLAMES

AD&D Dark Sun Adventure

by TSR

RRP \$30.00

Reviewed by Adam Whitt



Black Flames looks big and chunky; a US legal sized box with impressive cover art by Brom. But what do you get for your money? Inside are two spiral bound firm card flip books (also featuring colour art), and a flimsy 16 page story book. Attractive packaging, and a clever format but just a little disappointing when you consider the asking price. Don't get me wrong - the contents are good; more would have been better.

The short story by Lynn Abbey is a good hook and left my mouth watering for more, I assume TSR will oblige with a full length novel soon enough. The adventure plot is itself reasonable with plenty of potential for role playing as well as encounters for the blade happy. Without giving too much away the player characters get caught between two major NPC's racing toward a common goal; the players inevitably become critical to the success of one or other of the antagonists and its never certain who is best served. This sort of dilemma is what good adventures are all about.

The flip books are a great idea, and certainly add to the game enabling the referee to direct the players to certain graphics and text to add a visual component to the information she can give them. Some encounters have clues hidden away in these graphics which can be good and

bad. The danger being that the game might reduce to an elaborate puzzle.

I do like the harshness of the Dark Sun background and the difficult morality of that world. And I like the way TSR has recognised that role playing has matured from high fantasy where happy endings are inevitable to this Dark Sun world where *survival* is enough. To fit this framework, Black Flames utilises a system which splits each encounter into seven headings for the referee - Setup, Encounter, Role-Playing, Statistics, Reactions, Outcome. This allows the module designer the flexibility to cater for goal oriented players and role-players equally. Gone are random encounters and wandering monsters laden with huge treasures. Now the people and creatures you meet have real purpose, and not all plotlines are linear - allowing you and the players to set the direction of the adventure.

The module does, however, make sure the players return to the underlying plot by using the tried and tired methods of magical coercion, curses, traps that funnel the players in certain directions and the inevitable search through room plans; dungeon busting - ho hum.

Black Flames is a fair adventure; it will entertain you and your players for several sessions. More would have been better value.

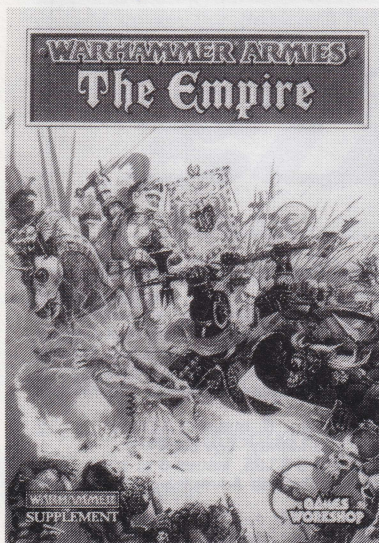
THE EMPIRE

Warhammer Armies Sourcebook

by Games Workshop

RRP \$40.00

Reviewed by Colin Taber



Warhammer Fantasy Battle has always needed a detailed army list, something more flexible and encompassing than the third edition's 'Warhammer Armies' hard back book. With this new series of paperback books, again labelled Warhammer Armies, it seems that Games Workshop is set to deliver.

I had been looking forward to this series, expecting them to be in true GW tradition usable, pleasingly graphic and a good read, but on the last point I was to be disappointed.

Having sat down to digest the information, I found to my irritation that I had seen a lot of it before. While the artwork was good, the maps interesting and the background *once* gripping it is to varying degrees old news. I suppose Games Workshop are hoping to impress a whole new generation of aspiring tabletop generals who have not encountered this background material before.

A lot of what appears has been printed in White Dwarf previously, even the gloriously colourful plates. There are some new rules; those specifically done for the new Empire miniatures. Regards the new miniatures, 20 of the book's 102 pages are devoted to black and white photographs of the miniatures, some depicted still on their sprues - a bit excessive for a supposed rule book. The only thing missing is an order form.

That was my first reaction, after consideration and a couple of subsequent flicks

through, I find the book pleasing enough, but suffering from the points I have mentioned above. For tabletop use it is of course good, with bits and pieces jumping to the fore as exciting or just plain curious in typical Warhammer style. For example see the Flagellants, and of course the Emperor himself, Karl Franz makes an appearance complete with the totally awesome weapon icon that gives the game its name, the Hammer of Sigmar.

In regard to road testing on the actual table top, I can't complain, and this is what saves the book. If it fails in other categories the more than usable force lists give a great many choices for an aspiring general to choose from. These forces are presented simply and well. The Empire has always been renowned for its masses of artillery and heavy cavalry, and this update for the new edition will not disappoint experienced Empire generals. And of course the Empire has a great range of troop types with 15 distinctive states to muster from.

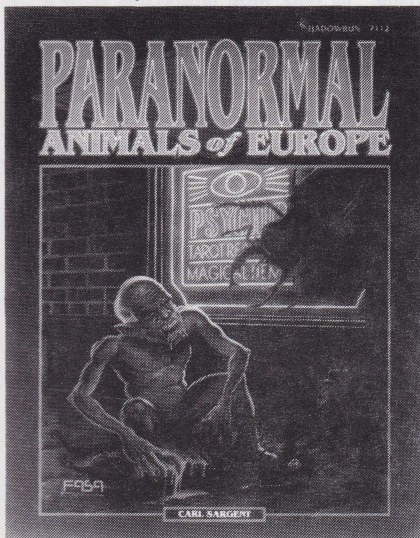
In summary, if you have already bought an Empire miniature force, you might as well make the comparatively small investment in this book. If you haven't as yet put up any money for a Warhammer Fantasy Battle force you may want to wait for the other releases in this series of books and look at choosing another race.

For now I will wait *off* the battlefield for *my* force of choice to assemble.

PARANORMAL ANIMALS of EUROPE

Shadowrun Sourcebook - FASA
RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Malcolm Adler



Hmmm. I am sitting down to write this review, trying to find something negative about this latest release for Shadowrun. What can I say? The book is in my opinion the best sourcebook released to date, perhaps only to be surpassed by the Tir Tairngire Sourcebook due out soon. To inform you why I'll go for a more detailed breakdown.

The book comes as a soft back with 160+ pages, 16 full colour plates and a format which is the best used to date in any RPG. Graphically the book is a work of art, illustrations are of an above standard quality, the colour work does the job well and the page layouts are functionally superb. From Abrams Lobster to the Wyrd Mantis, the sourcebook gives two pages per creature. This is room aplenty for descriptions, notes, a size comparison diagram, a 'range' map showing natural habitats and the famed and much loved *Shadowtalk* where runners leave opinions and rumours.

The research Carl Sargent has put into this book shows; he is a master in the RPG field. The book is very involved including the appendixes at the back which are full of more data that is once again a good read. Captivating.

The bad points of the release are simply the following; the book is concerned solely with

European critters (obviously), but in this attempt to be European, the net has been cast very wide, detailing paranormals that are part of myth, but have no real practical use in game play or are just a waste of space because they are too similar to other previously published critters. Their inclusion makes the book complete, which is not a bad thing.

For Paranormal Animals of Europe to be a worthwhile purchase you would need to be 'running in Europe, to import some of these paranormals to Australia or Seattle would be counter productive (while the rules do give excuses for how you can do this). What I would suggest is that if you look at the book and want to make the purchase either combine it with the London Sourcebook (also by Carl Sargent) and play a European campaign or just steer your group into being a bit more global (enrol the runners on a frequent flyer programme). In this way you can get your Australian or American based campaign into Europe and onto other places.

In summary this is a *very* high quality product, the best since the game's second edition last year.

Paranormal Animals of Europe, not a *normal* release.

INTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS HANDBOOK

Battletech & Mechwarrior
Sourcebook by FASA RRP \$30.00
Reviewed by Ron Fielding

The background to FASA's Battletech and Mechwarrior game universe is very detailed, and quite interesting to read; it is a shame more people don't actually 'role play' this system. Most people cannot resist the temptation to role play a bit before finding an excuse to jump back into their 'Mech and blast away on the tabletop.

The Intelligence Operations Handbook expands on previous sourcebooks by focusing on the activities of the various Intelligence agencies maintained by the Great Houses and the emerging rival organisations being set up by the Clans during their invasion of the Inner Sphere. This is a meticulous handbook written from the point of view of Wolfnet who filed this report prior to the invasion.

The Handbook is crammed with information and hundreds of great adventure hooks for referees looking for ways to steer their players away from 'Mechs and into more challenging and exciting low level operations. Tabletoppers can use it too. Recommended.

DREAM PARK GAMEMASTER PACK

by R. Talsorian Games RRP \$25.00
Reviewed by Adam Whitt

The Dream Park role playing game struck me as the perfect game, everything you need to play in one reasonably priced book; an easy game to learn, covering every possible genre and firmly based on the idea of players having fun. The release of the Gamemaster Pack doesn't necessarily change that view but it did make me groan inwardly a bit as I feared the system might be going for over-elaboration. I needn't have worried, however, as there are no new rules to learn in this new product. The Pack consists of a sturdy three panel referee screen with all combat, movement, spells, skills, wounds and powers tables brought together for easy reference, a set of nine new NPC cards, and a 48 page book introducing detailed specs on new weapons (Aztec Dagger to Cruise Missile), armour (Bark Shield to Starship Trooper Powered Armour), vehicles (Sled to Starship), NPCs (Cleopatra to Adolph Hitler) and monsters (Godzilla to Zeus). No-one should ever get bored playing Dream Park; the open ended system ensures that the possibilities for adventure are endless. Try it.

DIRE DOCUMENTS

Call of Cthulhu Accessory
by Chaosium RRP \$18.00
Reviewed by Adam Whitt

What's in a name? I'd say Chaosium left themselves wide open with this one!

Dire Documents is a collection of 31 pieces of stationary, printed in two colour (black and blue) to discourage photocopying, designed for use as clues for Cthulhu Keepers to add realism and atmosphere to their horror campaign. The documents come loose within the shrink wrap packaging and include letterheads from Near East Treasure Imports, Misatonic University, commitment papers to the Arkham Sanatorium, Formal Invitations, and certificates for Meritorious Service and Best Death Awards.

Not a bad idea, but the execution leaves a bit to be desired. If Chaosium had added a few notes giving hints and tips on how best to use these accessories in the game, included more copies of the more useful items (such as the Best Death Award certificates) and done something more interesting and evocative with the actual graphics on the documents themselves (they are of a standard most home computer users could readily produce), the package would have represented more value for money.

TESSA MINI CAMPAGN PART 2

By Colin Taber

The sun sparkled its golden rays upon the crowded Maroklara Sea. A small fleet of fishing boats headed for the harbour, their harbour. Many ships were moored in the bay, the docks of Caldari had filled. The latest arrivals readied their packs, preparing to stake their claims for gold. The Tessian fisherman steered their boats carefully through crowded waters. Avoiding the many unwanted prospectors. Tessa had changed...

Part II

The first part of "Tessa" was printed in issue 10, at this stage you should have the beginnings of a gold rush. This marks the death knell of Tessa, the lifestyle of today is about to give way to the time of tomorrow.

The gold miners will flood the town of Caldari, making the Tessans strangers in their own land. The town will become overcrowded and prices will rise as demand sky rockets.

It will take only three weeks before prices are tripled and the disgruntled Tessans organising militias to control the miners with brutal beatings and worse as punishment for any law breaking.

Amongst all this the Warlock may have returned and Grandmother will be ailing.

The Word Spreads

The full extent of the rush was only touched upon last issue, miners will come by the hundreds and eventually (by *Deaths Midnight Dance* plot) there will be over five thousand of them on the island. This in turn will make Caldari a stop on various trade routes for food and equipment. The crowded market will be a mercantile dream.

The most important change this will cause on Tessa is the establishment of a mining shanty town on the western shore of Lake Tamor backing against the mountains (after the *Spire Mine* plot) called *Orocivito* (meaning Gold City, population 2000). This is where the bulk of the miners will live, but many will make trips to (or stay in the other shanty town on the edge of Caldari) Caldari for the inns, women, church and market.

Another important change is the mood of hostility by the Tessans, against the prospectors.

GOLD RUSH!

The last major change for the island is the arrival of two monks and an initiate with one of the later boat loads of Burvois miners (after *A Taxing Time* plot). They are here to preach and look after the followers of Rosemaigne, the state Church of Burvoy. Clashes between these three and Father Penzanna will be common.

Where Are They Now?

The party may be in various forms at this stage of the mini-campaign. They may be working with Urbestro Falgri as town watch, they may be prospectors, vampire hunters, smugglers, thieves, guards or still plain adventurers. In any case the plot lines below should be used either as background, or as fully interactive storylines.

The future holds many things, I suggest playing them in the order presented.

The Plotlines

A Crooked Merchant

This plot can be used repeatedly in different forms, it is a simple demonstration of the animosity between the Tessans and the miners.

1. The players see an argument between a Heletian miner and a Tessian stall owner, they are arguing over the price.
2. The seller makes no apologies and is not going to offer a cheaper price. The miner having no other choice pays for the goods and storms off cursing. A Tessian lady buys the same item from the same stall moments later and is charged half the price.
3. The players don't have to do anything about this, but perhaps a miner the players have befriended or one of their own number gets the same treatment. This can be used repeatedly with slight variations as it is happening all the time. Perhaps the miner hears the price the local will be charged, or just doesn't accept the exorbitant price, possibly an argument will turn into a brawl.
4. If a brawl should erupt the militia will be quickly upon the scene, pushing the Tessian merchant to one side and beating the miner regardless of who is right or wrong.

The New Mines

While most miners are being ferried out to Spirus Island to dig within the gold laden cavern others are searching for gold elsewhere. The larger island next to Spirus is covered in miners, also are the nearby mountains of Tessa-proper.

It is a case of "every man for himself" and in this situation many fights erupt over who found what where. Greed has overtaken sanity.

1. Nearby an old prospector is bent over his working area, scrabbling through the rubble he has laboured over "I've found it!". He yells, holding a gold wormed rock to the sky. Nearby miners gather around excitedly.

2. A big Heletian miner storms up, grabbing the ore from the old mans hand "This is my claim!" he yells. Most prospectors know it is a lie, others are spoiling for a fight, others still have eyes for the barely visible golden vein that sparkles from the old man's claim.

3. A fight ensues, miners steer the fight away from the claim. Like rats to a corpse they start working the claim, stripping it of its worth. Soon the ore is gone and the old prospector dead (unless the players stop it).

4. Later a young man arrives, looking for his father. With horror he realises what has happened, vowing revenge he pleads for information on the identity of the murderer.

5. The players can help the man (and should if they are of good alignment) find the murderer and help right the wrong. This situation (again with variation) will occur on a regular basis. Until there is enough mines and claims underway miners will continue to die at each others hands.

The Burvois, Unwelcomed

Two weeks after the discovery of gold the first ship arrives from Burvoy, it carries twenty miners aboard. By the end of the week there will be one hundred and sixty miners from Burvoy in Caldari. They are largely unwelcomed as they are *foreign*, have *strange* customs, *don't follow* the Church of Baimiopia and many *don't even speak* the Heletian language (one in ten do). In short they are heretics, and labelled as such by a suspicious Father Penzanna (ignoring the fact that Pierre is from Burvoy). He tells the Tessans that they are works of the devil!

1. Among the dozens of new arrivals every day are men from Burvoy. They have come to make their fortune, unfortunately many of them will merely find a knife in their back as Tessa's mine fields become more crowded and criminal. Among them is a very happy looking man who singles out the party.
2. "You not are from here?" He stumbles out in broken Heletian. He is talking to the party in general, telling by the comfortable look of the party, their manner of dress and their conduct that they are not of Tessa, but are (semi-) welcome and at home here.
3. He asks them for help, where are the good mines? Will they be his friends? Can he stay with them for a while? Where are the safe inns? Where are the safe women?
4. He is genuinely a nice guy, his name is Jean Albault. If the party wants to let him join them, fine. If not let them see him fall into the same traps they did with Bardi stealing from him, the Calvanni boys pushing him around and merchants ripping him off. If they don't take pity on him do what you feel is necessary, but without the players help Jean is destined to die on his claim or be arrested and thrown into the watch house (never to come out alive). The



players should realise that this is one soul they do have some control over.

5. If he is arrested while in a brawl with a stall holder or Tessian he will cry for the players. Should they not be in the area at the time, Old Joseph will hear & tell the players.

The Policy Holders

A shanty town has sprung up around Caldari as soon as the miners start arriving, the bulk of the foul, open sewered place arches around the bay towards the ruins. In this *slum* is another marketplace. The market stall owners here are mainly Heletians, the militia won't enter the slum, consequently a group of thugs who have given up on mining already have set up a protection racket.

1. Old Joseph tells the players that Bardi wants to see them, and that there is coin in it for them. If they ask for more details Old Jo will tell them to go to the shanty town's markets, Bardi will meet them there.

2. The market place of the slum is a foul place with ditch style open sewers carrying waste to the sea. Many stalls are open and the miners are haggling like their lives depended on a bargain. Against one side of

the market 'square' is a ramshackle building which will be in a few days Caldari's third inn. It has already had three murders take place within it, worse is no doubt to come.

3. Bardi approaches them and tells them to watch a stall over his shoulder. A pair of big Heletians walk up to the owner who is visibly shaken by their appearance. One puts a hand on his shoulder while the other man spreads his palm in front of the merchant. The action takes place between the bodies, hiding what is happening. The party can make out the merchant reach into his purse and hand some coins to the second man, the two thugs leave.

4. Bardi explains that a cell of the Meloni family from the Kramer Confederation city state of Eamastou has arrived on Tessa and is already setting up protection rackets. Bardi as the sole member and founder of the *Tessian thieves guild* isn't impressed and says he has arranged with the merchants here (who have identified all the Meloni cell gang members) for them to pay him per head for the 'removal' of the thugs.

5. Bardi is asking the party to take part in murder. There are seven thugs, they are

usually in groups of at most three and are quite powerful (but not skilled) fighters.

6. The merchants are offering him 200 gold coins per thug. Bardi will offer the players as little as he can to entice them to join him.

7. The thugs can be found among the shanty town or Caldari at any time, the only time they are alone is when they are mugging someone in an alley, when they are with the many women of pleasure who are arriving with the miners, or lastly, when they are extorting money from merchants.

Grandmother Speaks - The Spire Mine

Grandmother will appear on a hill top or bluff near the players one dusk the players should be made to see her, going to the bluff. When they greet her they will see that she seems sickly. She will cough and then greet them. She will answer any of their questions as best she can (coughing all the while) before getting on to the real business she wants to talk to them about.

1. She says "I have seen great death on the harbour, beware for gold is the bringer of death." If questioned further all the party will get out of her is that the deaths shall originate on another island, not Tessa and that it will happen within two days.

2. The players should be able to deduce that the location is Spirus Island. While it will be too late to go to the island tonight, if they leave for Spirus in the morning (from Caldari it will take them most of the day to get there) they will discover the foundations of what Grandmother was seeing. The miners in their greed for gold are working Spirus island like ants. Rubble is being thrown into the sea, making new beaches on one side while the miners in the large cavern near the centre of the island continue to follow the veins of gold deeper into the earth. By doing this they have tunnelled below the water level, several groups of miners are only a pick stroke away from hitting the now desperately weakened rock wall keeping the sea out of the cavity.

3. If the players can work out what the danger is they will cause a riot at the suggestion that the mine should be closed and evacuated. If they hesitate upon what to do the players will hear the walls of the cavern groan, slowly water will start to pool at the bottom of the cavity, seeping in from a thousand small cracks. Make it plain to the party that this is the time to leave and as they turn their backs on the gold crazed miners the island will implode under the pressure of the sea and a foolish miner's final pick stroke. The island will resemble a reef afterwards, crushed and drowned bodies floating to the surface and out to sea.

4. By the next morning in Caldari harbour fifty bodies are seen floating amongst the various moored boats. Grandmother has spoken. I would hope by this time the players are starting to feel that they can do little by themselves, if the thought of teaming up with Urbestro Falgri has not yet occurred to them let him approach them with the idea or present it via old Jo (money shouldn't be a problem as gold is just oozing out of Tessa).

A Taxing Time

This can only be used after the players have approached Falgri (or he has asked them) to work for him. They are posted to him as a personal

guard/staff (paying a base wage of 10 gold coins per day including food and lodgings at his residence). At this point in Tessa, on a solo level the party can't do much, but with Falgri and the militia they might be able to better control things.

1. A tax collector arrives from the Kramer Confederation city of Vangre. The city (see pages 26-29 for info) has decided that it is up to them to collect taxes as Tessa is technically a part of the Kramer Confederation. The collector, Banoa, is a pompous fat and balding bureaucrat, Urbestro Falgri greets him as etiquette would require but puts off an official audience with him, claiming a recent mining disaster requires his attention.

2. The players who follow Falgri as his retinue can see his situation. Without saying so much, it is obvious that Banoa is here to take Vangre's share of Tessa's prosperity. Falgri tells the party when away from Banoa to take care of him (think of this as a test), he wants the collector stalled or made to leave (not killed!), giving Falgri time to prepare for when Vangre's next collector arrives.

3. Falgri will reward innovative thinking. If they scare Banoa off by convincingly portraying the island as plague infested for example, Falgri will give them a bonus.

4. Should the players make it obvious to Banoa that they are trying to be rid of him, he will return to Vangre with such opinions. Should he be harmed (or killed) Falgri will be furious (so will Vangre's rulers!).

Death's Midnight Dance

The Tessans, the Heletians and the Burvois don't mix very well. Four weeks after the date gold was discovered the miners will riot. The spark is lit, as many other disputes, by women.

1. The Tessian Lodge inn, the tavern owned by the Calvanni's has degenerated into a whore house as the Calvanni family tries to make some coin out of the miners. Many of locals still drink here, be it in a small separate side lounge. Among the Tessans are some of their women, these ladies who are usually only here to retrieve drunken husbands have to run a gauntlet of leers and groping hands when entering and leaving. One night, this night, a drunken miner goes too far.

2. Urbestro Falgri asked the players to keep an eye on things. He suggested they went to the two local inns and listened to the conversations, as this was a fairly accurate way to take the pulse of the Tessian and the miners community.

3. While at the Tessian Lodge, Giovanni's wife has to run the gauntlet when she comes to retrieve him. He is drunk. Many of the Tessans comment on the miners needing a good lesson. He meets her at the side lounge entrance and bids good night to his fellows, turning he tries to lead her out.

4. The other Tessans watch as he leaves, passing through the near side of the main lounge which is full of Heletian miners. They respectfully make way for a man and his wife. When Giovanni tries to head through the last yards of the main lounge that is occupied by drunken Burvois one of them walks up behind the Tessian and his wife, pushing her aside. He raises a bottle, bringing it down on Giovanni's head.

5. All hell breaks loose as drunken miners abuse the Tessian's wife, she is screaming

while Giovanni is either unconscious or dead. The Heletian miners argue for them to leave the woman be, saying she is not of the gutter. The argument very quickly becomes physical. This is the pulse of Tessa.

6. The inn erupts into a brawl of about forty Burvois versus thirty Heletians. It spills into the street. The players can do several things, join in, break it up, alert Urbestro Falgri.

7. If they do nothing to stop it, the brawl will spread to the Shanty town, ending only when several shacks are just smoking ruins and thirty miners dead. The Tessans are sickened by Giovanni and his wife's death...

8. This riot may re-occur again, the militia will be used for any subsequent flare ups.

A Clash of Faiths

The Monks of Rosemaigne will be active on Tessa as soon as they land, they will minister to the Burvois, but also trying to convert Heletians. This is something which will enrage Father Penzanna, particularly that the missionaries have divine powers, while he, as a normal church priest does not.

1. This conflict can be portrayed in a number of ways, one is father Penzanna and the Monks arguing over who gets to read the last rites and other similar situations. Father Penzanna views the monks as heretics, they in turn view him as one as well.

2. This is going to be an occasionally recurring plot device, any time a religious matter comes up both churches are going to have to be considered.

The Fever - Death's Encore

Word is spreading of a new claim, a very rich claim. The location of the mine is **unknown** (on the southern coast of the island known as 'Flets Landing' see map in issue 10) this island was originally the northern coast of the island of the Sanjo Drajo, the Warlock's people.

1. A lone Heletian comes to Caldari loaded with gold, the nuggets have red streaks running through the metal and quartz. While the gold is bought (like all ore) at the Urbestro's office it is named 'Blood Gold'.

2. Urbestro Falgri will hear about it the day it is cashed, therefore so too will his employees, the players. The blood gold is unsettling, when the players look out of a window or go outside they will see Grandmother on a nearby hill top or bluff, waiting for them...

3. She will tell them that the blood gold is a plague carrier and that it comes from the island's terrible past. The mine needs to be sealed or the Blood Plague will be released. She is coughing and choking, she is very ill.

4. They will need to follow the miner when he next cashes in his nuggets (in two days time). When they do they will discover he returns to his mine on Flets Landing. He is the only man working the area and is acting paranoid, he thinks he's being followed. When they get to his mine they will find a narrow cave opening, outside of which are three shallow graves (ex-comrades). The narrow cave twists among large boulders to a cavern, in front of the players will be a set of huge stone double doors each measuring two yards by four.

5. Inside the cavern is the frenzied miner who will attack with burning oil and a long

sword AC 4, Hp 22, two attacks per round, he will have surprise. The miner has been possessed by greed and the Horned God. The main chamber contains a huge golden (with bloody streaks) tree. The twisted specimen plunges roots of apparent solid gold deep into the stone floor, the miner has been collecting fallen branches and other debris to cash. He will fight to the death to protect his icon.

6. The tree is of the Horned God's *Turmenti Kuld*, an organisation devoted to the spread of greed and plague. The roots of the divine tree are spreading the *new* Blood Plague to Tessa right now.

7. If the players touch the gold they have a 10% chance of contracting the plague. What they should do is block the door shut (again) and return to Caldari with the news at once.

8. The gold that was chased has been handled by many people who have in turn been in contact with other people, a new Blood Plague is starting to spread...

Grandmother's Medicine

When the players return to Urbestro Falgri's residence he will send for the other powers of Tessa, both Father Penzanna and Anthony Calvanni. When they are all gathered and they start to discuss what has been seen Grandmother will enter the room, all will fall silent.

1. Grandmother looks very pale and sickly, coughing and choking. She will tell them that there is only one cure for Tessa's ills and that it rests with the Warlock. If he hasn't already been, he must be regenerated as he will know how to rid Tessa of the Blood Plague. She will tell them that the heart is lodged in the reef and that someone will have to free it and take it to the Abode on the night of the next holy day where the Warlock will regenerate. Once regenerated he will have to be convinced by someone that he should look at the Blood Tree, and do something about it. This someone will have to be the players as the Tessans will be terrified of the idea and Grandmother cannot enter the Abode as it is not part of Tessa.

2. Getting the ruby like heart is easy, it will take the party about two hours of wading in the shallow waters, searching the reef. Bringing the heart to Tessa's shore will trigger the regeneration, but the party must be at the Abode at sundown on the next holy day so as to greet the Warlock.

3. The Warlock will have to be convinced, while he is not mad he is *very* thirsty for his favourite liquid and will be fairly narrow minded about his goals. Should the party present good reason for him to travel to Flets Landing he will, suggestions are; Blood, stopping the plague from harming the Tessans and it is a legacy of his old people.

4. He can't go that night, he needs to get his house in order, feed and prepare some concoctions to subdue the plague. He will invite the players back in two days time.

5. Meanwhile the first of several hundred are starting to die in the shanty towns. The Tessans had been warned and have been very careful with who they see and contact. While some will die most of the casualties will be among the miners.

6. The Warlock will mix a foul smelling brew and take it with the players aid and directions. Once on Flets Landing the players will see signs that other miners are on the island. When they get to the cavern of



the Blood Tree they will be confronted by double their number in possessed miners. The players will have to dispose of them while the tired but powerful Warlock will help but be mainly intent on cleansing the tree. The cleansing ritual of the tree takes twelve hours in which the entire tree is brushed with his brew. Once completed the source of the plague will be destroyed, the cavern sealed and guardian spirits posted.

Fools Gold, Soul Sold

The main theme of this entire campaign is the cycle of life. On Unae this cycle is marked by harsh competition and brutal progress. The saddest aspect of Tessa is that the island's nature spirit, known to us as Grandmother has reached the end of her cycle. Her death is marked by the gold rush. She can do nothing to stop it, but she can prepare the island for its *next* custodian nature spirit.

Once the Blood Plague plot is completed by the players they should be faced by a stormy, surreal afternoon, moving to dusk. Caldari will be shadowed and Grandmother will be silhouetted by the sunset as she stands on the nearest hill top. Finally she collapses in full view of the players and Tessans. With the setting of the sun a huge black raven will fly above them, heading skywards. She leaves the Warlock to watch over the islanders as a temporary guardian, knowing that as she dies Tessa's spirit will be born again in a new incarnation.

A Campaign Summary

Below follows a suggested timetable for the plot lines (including suggested moments for repetition). Plots from Part 1 are included (in italics) to make the list complete.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>The Catch Fails</i> | 2. <i>A Herder Slaughtered</i> |
| 3. <i>Thief!</i> | 4. <i>A Mining Dispute</i> |
| 5. <i>Into the Abode</i> | 6. <i>A Crooked Merchant</i> ¹ |
| 7. <i>The New Mines</i> ¹ | 8. <i>Burvois, Unwelcomed</i> |
| 9. <i>A Crooked Merchant</i> ² | 10. <i>The Policy Holders</i> |
| 11. <i>The Spire Mine</i> | 12. <i>A Taxing Time</i> |
| 13. <i>Deaths Dance</i> ¹ | 14. <i>A Clash of Faiths</i> ¹ |
| 15. <i>A Crooked Merchant</i> ³ | 16. <i>The New Mines</i> ² |
| 17. <i>A Clash of Faiths</i> ² | 18. <i>Deaths Dance</i> ² |
| 19. <i>A Clash of Faiths</i> ³ | 20. <i>Deaths Encore</i> |
| 21. <i>Grandmother's Medicine</i> | |

All indicated repetition of plots will need variation so players will not be 'repeating' the story, for inspiration build it on to the previous plot they have completed. For example 'Deaths Dance²' is the riot plot, take the basis for the second riot from the 'Clash of Faiths' plot just completed (number 17), eg. the Monks have worked up their followers over some 'problem' and steam needs to be released ending in the desecration of Father Penzanna's Church or some other thing which will spark the riot.

Completing The Campaign

The gold rush will continue for years, perhaps decades to come. Tessa has changed, will continue changing and will never be as it was. Once the detailed plots have been completed it is possible to keep adventuring on the island with stories of your own devising. The new spirit of Tessa will not be fully active for one year and a day, in the meantime he appears as a hungry child, always watching, never speaking.

What I suggest for those who want to tread further upon the fertile campaign grounds of Unae is that you move onto the Kramer Confederation. The text detailing this area is full of ideas, which will trigger your own. Here you can work up great plots in the same realistic and gritty tone of Unae.

The Church of Baimiopia

The Church of Baimiopia is the largest and most powerful religion in the Dormetian region of Unae. This faith has gained such status due to it being adopted as the state religion in all of the Heletian League member states. The many widespread Heletian settlements and their prosperity is also another important factor in the spread of the word of *Kreinta*. While the church is a Heletian religion there is a large branch of the church in Burvoy (many of these followers are ethnic Heletians) and also in Fletland where the desperate Flets are adopting many aspects of Heletian culture as part of a campaign to gain entry into the Heletian League.

The church has been an integral part of Heletian culture since tribal times when many of the large Heletian tribes worshipped the same god, Kreinta. This god was a powerful and unifying symbol for them and seems to have been

their shepherd since the dawn of time.

It is said that Kreinta visited Unae, taking the body of dead man-boy named Baimio who was due to come of age a day before his death, instead dying of an Ogre inflicted wound. As this avatar Kreinta fought with his followers in the Sidian valley against the Ogres, this was over five centuries ago. After many battles Kreinta travelled amongst his people teaching them and finally leading his greatest followers to the first fork in the Sidian River where he founded his holy city. The city is known today as Baimiopia in honour of the dead boy. This great city is the centre of the church and known among the more orthodox of Kreinta's followers as 'The Holy Font' it is also the capital of Greater Baimiopia, the most powerful member of the Heletian League.

After twenty years walking the surface of Unae Kreinta left for paradise, the church has never explained how, but the popular story says that Kreinta, being a god could only die by the hand of one of his own followers wielding one of his own holy weapons. The finger of legend points to the head of the Helitite Order, Benjo Descartus, who was found according to legend dead by suicide, beside the devilishly black magicked earthly form of Kreinta.

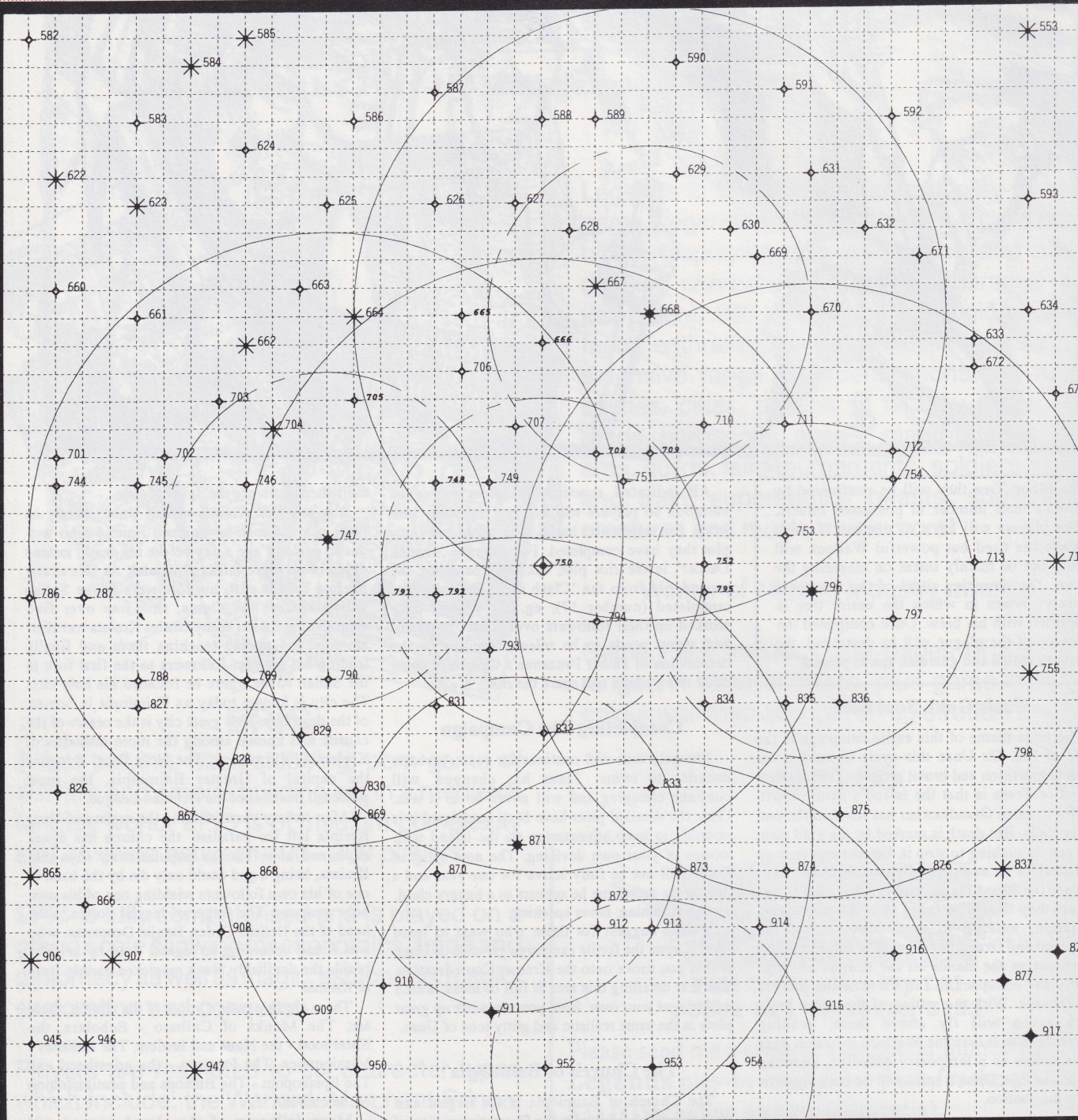
There are five main Orders of the church, these are; The Monks of Calbaro - Scholars, the Sisterhood - the Nuns and healers, The Helitites - Missionaries, The Pastrom - the priesthood and The Episkopom - The Bishops and administration of the church.

Many followers of the church respect and acknowledge Kreinta as their creator, but actually worship a saint, canonised by the church. Many Saints exist covering various facets of life, for example Saint Baimio is the saint of sacrifice, wisdom and mercy, Saint Fatima is the saint of virtue and innocence, Saint Mathius is the saint for the traveller and Saint Romeo is the saint of traders and merchants.

The religion has always been a powerful organisation in the Heletian areas of Dormetia, being a major driving and unifying force of the Heletian nations.

The church and Kreinta's followers await his return, when his next incarnation is said to herald a possible Apocalypse for the Heletians. One in which they will need to prove their worth, loyalty and faith to earn Kreinta's merciful intervention.

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SHADOWRUN[®] IN AUSTRALIA

Part V

Marega, the nucleus of the coming Dreamtime nation.

Colin Taber takes a quick look at a phantom file.

Most Australians aren't aware of it.

Most have been kept ignorant of the truth.

Australia in 2054 is dying. Eurasian Australia is seemingly doomed to fall to the Dreaming... in time. How long it takes does not matter to the spirits, what matters is that it will. One day the continent-nation will again be under one rule, that of the Dreamtime and the nation shall be called Marega.

After more than two centuries 'justice' will be done.

The *first battle* in 2011AD saw the Dreaming return, one million Australians died, Canberra nearly fell and the Eurasian nation was pushed back to its urban blights, known now as the 'City States'. The time is approaching for the *Second Battle* and finally the *Third*.

War is to come to Australia.

MAREGA

This organisation is put simply the infrastructure of the coming Dreamtime nation. It is made up of fearless Sorcerers, Shamans, Warriors, Deckers and many more. Its heart is in the Exclusion Zone (EZ), operating mainly from outback ghost towns that are slowly being rebuilt to be more in tune with the Dreamtime. It also has many special places within the city states of modern Australia, the Marega organisation is spreading its base and influence.

The Dreamtime is still increasing in power, so much so that a second Exclusion Zone fence is being built around Australia's cities. The first has slowly been failing and with growing frequency is being penetrated by EZ vermin. This the Australian government tries to hide, but slowly the word is getting out.

Most of Marega's current work is concentrated on destroying the remaining Elven groves in the EZ. Once this has been accomplished the Elven nation itself, Tir Miallae will be struck down and its citizens put to flight. Even now a mighty casting is being prepared, soon it will be called and sung as part of a huge *continental* spell. This spell will bring down the magical veil that keeps the Dreamtime out of Tir Miallae. The collapse of the Elven Veil will herald the beginning of the Second Battle.

THE SECOND BATTLE

These happenings are on a colossal scale, ghost tribes walk the land hunting their killers in the EZ. Bunyips stalk the EZ fence-borders, spirits haunt the alleys and sewers of the crowded, polluted city states. The outback is reclaimed, being regenerated and rebuilt. The Aboriginals of Marega are creating their own, true cities. Settlements that are in touch with both the Dreamtime and technology. Utilising the pilfered tech of AOTC, Optus, a hundred other corps and the federal government, Marega prepares itself for the coming war, a cleansing battle to save the land, the Second Battle.

This will be a battle fought to rid the land of its cancerous blights; not Eurasian Australia, but the twisted ghost tribes who represent the Dreaming's pain and anger at the massacres of its children during European colonisation. The ghost tribes have allies, *the Shamans of Djapana*, the followers of dying totems, once again victims of colonisation. These totems are twisted, retarded by the pain, anger and anguish they have felt through the past two centuries. Now they wish only vengeance and so they ally via their shamans with the bitter ghost tribes. This battle will be Australia's first civil war, pitting Marega against Djapana. It will be fought largely unnoticed by the city states as it will be a war waged with the powers of creation. Marega will be fighting to restore the Dreaming, while Djapana will be fighting to bring about a dark, genocidal terror, to kill



Eurasian Australians and Marega. The city states will see only huge dust, electrical and mana storms, none of which they understand as anything but natural, Dreaming phenomenon.

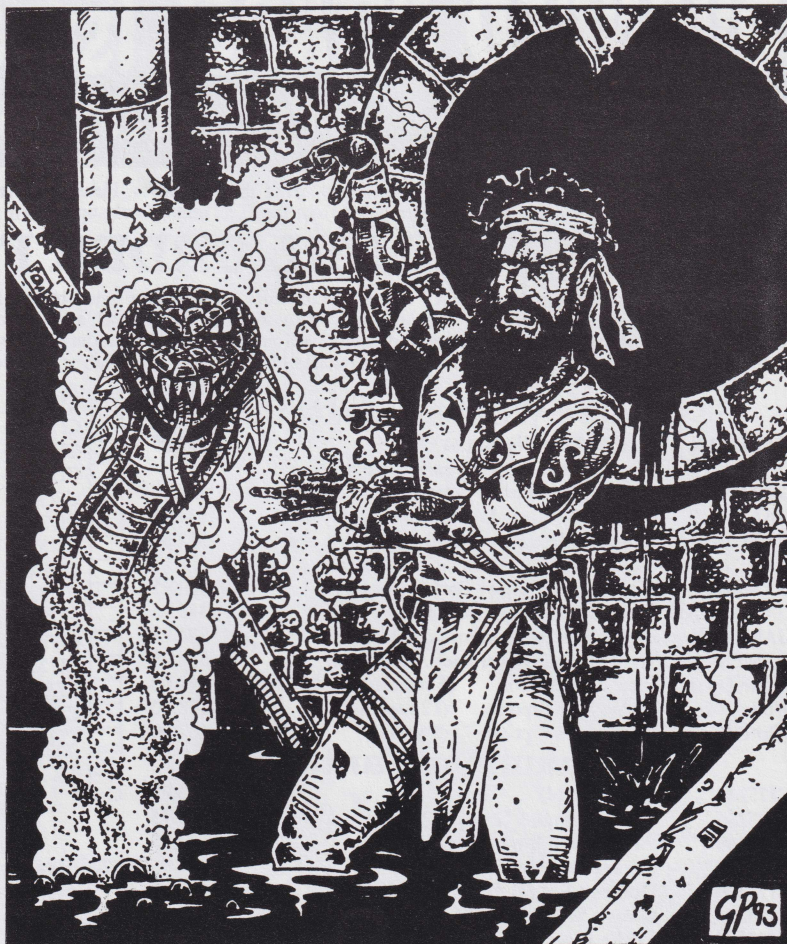
THE THIRD, FINAL BATTLE

The cycles of magic haven't peaked as yet, the peak will occur in the distant future, it is here when finally, well before Canberra is a millennia old that Marega will be a unified nation. It is to this date the organisation works, in tune with the Dreaming, the spirits and the future.

The Dreamtime beckons all Aboriginal runners in the cities, recognising the raw talent they represent. Many such runners eventually work whole heartedly for Marega as part of the organisation or act as part time operatives in the city states. In either case when an Aboriginal receives the Dreaming's call it is hard to refuse, knowing in their hearts it is destiny and an honour.

>>>>> Hey Chummer, don't believe everything you scan. Sure Marega sounds great and full of ideals but I don't know if I would trust all of its members not to ice me as I'm Anglo - **Shadowbreed 01:12:34 01,May,'54** <<<<<

>>>>> Watch what you say Anglo, Marega have some fairly special attitudes and methods. You spread lies and you'll be down for the die. The spirits say that it is the only Dreaming way - **Dream Warrior 01:13:56 01,May'54**<<<<<



WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

It is said by some in Marega that following close on the heels of the second battle will be a short but savage Corp. war with Marega. Many view this as inevitable, a war between the huge communication based Corps. AOTC and Optus among others. These corps are always singled out by Marega due to the fire fights that occur on a regular basis now in the EZ, between Corp. maintenance squads and Marega members. It is assumed by both sides that eventually the battles will escalate and continue to do so until one group can make serious inroads into the other's turf. As the corps have little hope of taking the alien Dreamtime lands of the EZ it is viewed Marega will eventually be the victor.

>>>>> That's great and all but remember the Universal Brotherhood made inroads into the EZ. Correct me if I'm wrong but they **still** have their colony towns just west of the Sydney sprawl don't they? They have also been there for over sixteen months, longer than any other Corp., government or other organisation has been able to stay settled in the EZ by about fourteen months - **Shadowbreed 01:14:14 01,May,'54** <<<<<

>>>>> While it is true Anglo, the spirits say that it is only happening because of the UB's magical base. What magical base you ask? Well just keep asking, and not too loudly, particularly near the Sydney branch - **Dream Warrior 01:15:06 01,May'54**<<<<<

THE OLD WAYS AND THE NEW

The old ways continue, tradition is tradition, and the culture has survived the massacres, plagues and the hundreds of thousands of murders. The culture is alive and growing, but not whole, having lost many of its roots and branches.

Regardless, the core, the heart is still pumping and getting stronger. The new Maregan society is a mix of the old and new, chrome and spear, bark and plasitc. The people of Marega are trying something free of the corruption and vices that Australia and the rest of the globe offers.

>>>>> This is beginning to sound like Alice in Dreaming-land. You guys are human like everyone else (apart from meta's I suppose) and from all I've read in the 'Arnhem files' you're going to eventually end up with the same fragged up society as everyone else. You can't escape it, quit trying - **Shadowbreed 01:17:18 41,May,'54** <<<<<

>>>>> That's your opinion Anglo, if you're being careful enough to back page you'll be pleased to know that us "Dreamtimers" are so disorganised that we have got a tracer on you **now**, just to find out what you **do** know. Ever seen a spirit in the matrix? Look over your shoulder - **Dream Warrior 01:18:46 25,May'54**<<<<<

>>>>> - **Shadowbreed 01:19:37 01,May,'54** <<<<<

THE GHOST TRIBES

The ghost tribes are simply after vengeance, they are against the Maregan vision of the future which is a mesh of the old and the ultra new. While Marega will see Shaman beside Decker and Sorcerer beside Street Sam the ghost tribes want revenge. It was they who murdered the Eurasian residents of outback Australia in 2011 when they returned with the Dreamtime, it is they who are Marega's greatest enemy as the fight nears for the Dreaming's *civil war*.

This is Australia's most frightening, most destructive secret. The very soul of Australia is being bled, slowing the return of the Dreaming is being corrupted into a Nightmare. The Second Battle is the continent's only chance to 'wake up'.

ADVANCED CITADEL Issue 6 Mar/Apr '93

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BEDLAM

A Suggested Plotline for the Ravenloft Demi-Plane of Dread

by Andrew Daniels

Horror is the most difficult of all emotions to evoke in a role playing game. TSR has taken a stab at it with the introduction of the Ravenloft setting and they have hit the mark, a chill dagger stroke to the heart. The following article is an atmosphere piece, a suggested plot outline that can be expanded into a scenario for AD&D 2nd Edition set in Ravenloft. Alternatively, because *Bedlam* also draws on Unae for background material this story could easily be adapted for use in that campaign world. Read on and be prepared to shudder...

Up On The Moors

The reason for taking the path across the moors is irrelevant. The referee should simply commence the party up on the moors telling them they are on a simple errand that should only take a couple of days. The events that follow are largely independent of any previous happenings in the Ravenloft campaign world. You could easily use this as an introductory adventure, travelling the moors the party enter the mists and are transported to the Demi-Plane of Dread.

The moors are dark and melancholy. Shallow rivulets of water meander across thick peat bogs. The going is slow, and hindered by a drizzling rain (-4 to all Fire Building NWP checks). Mist and fog banks drift constantly across the moor, disorienting the group (-4 to all Navigation and Direction Sense NWP checks).

Organise a few minor encounters sufficient to weary and weaken the party - arrange for a PC to slip into bog of sucking mud that almost engulfs him. Drench them all so thoroughly they contract colds. Interrupt their nights with distant flickering lights and strange inhuman noises followed by fruitless investigations. You are doing this to make the invitation of somewhere dry, warm and comfortable irresistible.

The Blood Plague

Attack the party just before dawn with a flock of Blood Bats (see the Monster Gallery). These vile creatures are servants to Vorn, they feed on their victim, gorging themselves on its blood then carry the blood back to the vampire so that he can feed. Unfortunately, they also are carriers

of the Blood Plague (see "Winds of Change" iss. 10 and "Gold Rush" this issue).

At least one member of the party will contract the Blood Plague, the onset is swift and the symptoms alarming. The skin ulcerates, and seeps blood. The worst part is that this is happening inside too, with blood slowly flooding the lungs. The afflicted character will also start hallucinating, in this case dreaming of an anaemic looking woman with raven tresses, a devilishly attractive woman who beckons the player to come to her rescue. The Blood Plague is resistant to all known clerical healing spells and herbal remedies (for followers of Unae, the disease is actually a curse brought down by the Horned God).

The Asylum

Have the party find a small cottage with the single flame of a candle flickering in the only window, lighting their way. The cottage is in fact the gatehouse to a much larger mansion set inside a high lichen rusted wall. The mansion looks cold and dark, uninviting. The party have stumbled across the Asylum. Once it was a place where the wealthy and respectable hid their embarrassing relatives, and where other poor unfortunates were imprisoned for being 'eccentric'.

Beyond the gatehouse cottage stand a pair of heavy, ornate wrought iron gates with a family crest in them. Within the grounds are the overgrown remnants of a once ornate garden. The architecture of the place is heavily Gothic, overstated and ostentatious. Ivy trails like burst blood vessels under red-rimmed eyes across the crumbling walls of the mansion, gargoyles leer from the rainslick rooftops and darkened windows stare blindly across the unkempt grounds.

Inside the cottage, the furnishings are covered with white dust sheets. The candlelit kitchen is the only room in use. It has a table, chairs, chopping block, dresser, and pantry, but most importantly to the players, a stove that they might be able to warm themselves beside. The old man is its sole occupant. He is, Joseph, brother-in-law to owner of the mansion - Dr. Vorn Stoking.

Joseph will open the door to a civil party, allowing them into his parlour if

Our little party left Reinford twelve days before All Hallows Eve. Hired as messengers, we were to deliver some mundane Ducal documents to the Count of Whereby and expected no difficulty in our mission. We left in high spirits, little suspecting the dark horrors that would befall us.

We were four in number, Karloff the warrior, the priest Sorgunsonn, Klaus the mage, and myself Rixus the scout and scribe of this dire tale. We set off in high spirits. The sun shone brightly and the moor appeared as a gentle expanse of grass and brook. A greater misconception I cannot imagine. The rolling plain gave way to treacherous bog, the brooks to slime drenched runnels and the very heavens turned against us as the sun drew clinging fogs from foul smelling pools. The air grew thick and twisted trees loomed out of the mists as dark apparitions. Soon we were lost.

Disaster! Last night we were awakened by the screams of Sorgunsonn. He was stumbling about the camp with batlike creatures clinging to his exposed face and neck. We managed to beat them off but not before Sorgunsonn collapsed, his face white and marked with bite wounds that dribbled blood even after we administered aid.

We stumble across the moors completely lost. Sorgunsonn has gone from bad to worse. His pallid skin is ulcerating in blisters that weep blood. When awake he coughs blood. At night he babbles in his sleep about a pale maiden. Last night we others dared not sleep for fear of the bats. Klaus spotted a lone flickering light that did not look like the marsh lights that have been plaguing us and Karloff suggested we march off immediately. Perhaps there is someone who can help the sick priest.

The manor filled me with foreboding, but the choice of staying out on the dreary moors another night seemed worse. Karloff led us forward. The comforting candle we had seen from afar stood in a small kitchen window. Karloff banged on the door, but no-one answered. I was about to prize open the window when the door opened a crack and a pair of weepy red eyes peered out.

We found the old man to be quite friendly, but not talkative. We dragged out of him that the 'big house' as he termed it, was once a famous hospice. When we asked if it were



they behave; but under no circumstance will he allow them to light a fire less this arouses attention from the "big house". He will warn any who show interest in the "big house" to stay well away. If pressed, Joseph will offer little more information rather than this was once a hospital, a place of much learning. He will stay silent about what has happened since the hospital closed, moving to his rocking chair by the cold stove where he waits out the night awake. If threatened in any way, Joseph will run and hide.

Into the Vampire's Lair

Inquisitive players will want to explore the house anyway. But make it obvious that the sick player is dying and the "good doctor" is their only hope of finding a cure. Joseph, will insist they wait until light if they must go up to the "big house". He also asks them to swear to secrecy about his own whereabouts. As they approach the house the party will notice that the windows have all been blacked out with paint. Over time this has almost fused to the glass.

Vorn Stoking is a vampire. In all other ways he is actually quite friendly and will offer the party as much assistance as they can survive. He offers to help their sick comrade, taking him to a small ward upstairs and ministering a potion that numbs the character to the pain and alleviates the bleeding. Afterwards, when the character looks reasonably comfortable he will invite the remainder of the party to join him in his study. The referee should make every effort to make the players feel at ease with the Doctor as he answers all their questions about the Asylum, its architecture and history.

The Past

Vorn's version of events is as follows. The hospital was founded by himself and his brother-in-law, Joseph, as a place of healing and rest for those rich enough to afford this private clinic. Joseph had discovered some healing properties in the local peat that earned the hospital a wide reputation as a recuperative centre. Joseph, however, began to subvert the purpose of the hospice into a mock asylum where the elite's unwanted could be hidden for a fee. The hospital deteriorated into a centre of lunacy and torture as Joseph experimented with trauma treatment to try shock the insane out of their affliction.

Eventually, Vorn and his sister Eloise (Joseph's wife) could stand it no more and summoned help in the shape of the Knight's Paladin who swept through the place. Joseph was outraged and slew Eloise in a fit of pique before escaping across the moors never to be seen again.

Vorn has stayed on, however as Eloise still haunts the house and he cannot bear to leave her tormented soul. If there is a good aligned priest in the group, Dr. Stoking will beg them to lay her spirit to rest. Her ghost wanders the corridors of the mansion after dark. Vorn will accompany them in their search for Eloise, hindering their efforts in subtle little ways. He hopes to entertain his guests long enough to be able to pick them off one by one. Only when his sister is found or he is directly threatened will he openly reveal his true nature.

Here is the Truth

The hospital was established with the high ideals of helping the unfortunate. Vorn,

empty now, he became edgy and told us to leave the 'good doctor' alone. Shortly afterward he led us to a room where we could sleep in relative comfort. Sorgunsonn awoke several times in the night insisting we go to the rescue of his mystery maiden. We dare not touch him now for fear of his disease. During the night we heard something snuffling at the door, but there was nothing about, only old Joseph sitting silent in his chair.

The fetid gardens seemed even worse than the moors, thorny hedges overgrown with weeds have forced their way onto the gravel paths and rotting leaves are piled against the grim statuary. We walked up the wide steps to the front door and read the inscription on the brass doorplate - 'Bedlam'. This time Klaus took the lead and knocked. The door was opened even before the echoing ceased. A short stocky distinguished looking man appeared in the shadowy hall back from the doorway; on seeing Sorgunsonn's plight he immediately ushered us inside. The genteel sounding fellow introduced himself as Dr. Vorn Stoking.

I am the last survivor of our band. With unsteady hand I write my chronicle, angry red welts of the Blood Plague glare back at me, soon the sun will sink and he will come again. Each of us has succumbed to the appetite of the beast. I weep at the remembrance of each of my comrades' deaths. Sorgunsonn never recovered from the sleeping draught; Karloff was defiant to the end, cursing even as the last of his limbs were dissected from his body, taken to feed the Forgotten People; Klaus transfixed by the very stake he thought to pin the vampire with; and now it is my turn. I know Vorn will find me by the scent of my weeping blood...

however, was eaten by an unnatural hatred of Joseph as lover of his beloved sister. He turned to arcane arts in order to destroy their love, embracing the tenets of the Horned God to augment his dark researches with real power. He drove a wedge of discord between Eloise and Joseph, driving his brother-in-law away from the house (as far as the gatehouse anyway).

The asylum became a house of horror. Strange stories escaped of unnatural experiments being practised on the patients. Eventually the Knight's Paladin, suspecting agency of the Horned God shut the place down. Vorn, however, kidnapped his sister whom he loved with more than brotherly affection and escaped. Only after the Knights left the place empty and boarded up did Vorn dare to return, apparently alone. Joseph waits in the gatehouse unaware that Eloise still lives. Joseph is biding his time, cradling his hatred of Vorn, seeking for revenge.

Encounters in Bedlam

If the players search the house they will eventually find its terrible secrets. Take care to spring these horrid surprises on

them to maximise the horror and terror of Dr. Stoking's sordid decline to blood drinker.

Sister Dearest

Vorn has been attempting to indoctrinate Eloise into the ways of the Horned God, to turn her into a vampire so that she can share his eternal unlife. Her strong love for Joseph, however, enables her to resist his diabolic advances. She lies, strapped to a bed in the attic, weak from blood loss. Her drawn appearance, the wild look in her eyes and the elongation of her canines should mislead the players into believing she is the vampire. Vorn will reinforce this by breaking down and crying if she is discovered in his presence, begging the players to "Take pity on the girl."

The Larder

This is a long row of padded cells, once home to the lunatics. Now the cells are occupied by something that should not be. A number of Vorn's patients linger here. They have had their limbs removed and hang from halters strapped to the walls in order to make feeding that much easier.

They will beg to be released from their plight.

The Battery

This hall is filled with cages of assorted sizes. These house the Blood Bats which Vorn habitually releases to hunt for him.

The Basement

Deep in the basement is a furnace where Stoking used to burn his mistakes. If you are finding your players chaffing for a bit of action, place a **wraith** here, the old master of the furnace. The wraith will try to kill the players then load them into the furnace.

The Forgotten People

In the northern wing of the asylum lies the home of the 'forgotten people'. These are the patients that were left when the asylum closed. They live in near silence, mumbling and singing to themselves in hushed voices. They revere the Doctor as an evil god and are completely in awe of him. They have degenerated into a deranged, cannibalistic society that views any outsider as a potential meal.

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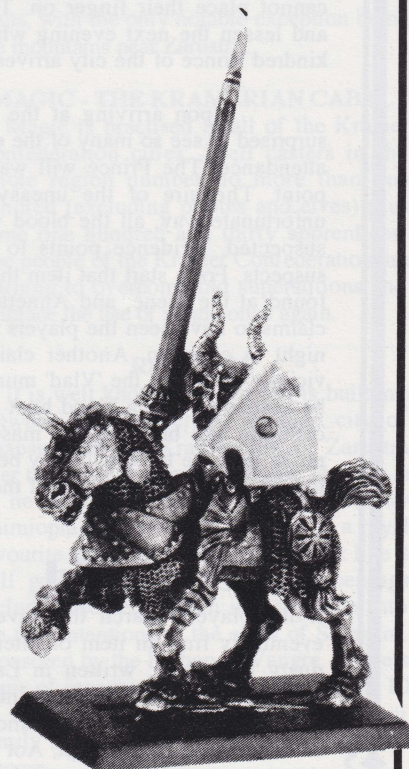
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THE CURSE OF AOT

By Marianne Payne

There's honey in the hollows,
and the contours of the body.
Sluggish golden river,
sickly golden trickle.
Ostia
COIL

An Invitation To Explain

Begin this story, by informing one of the players that they have lost something, something small and personal. Don't make a big deal out of it, just tell them. Also, work into your chronicle media reports of a bizarre series of killings known as the 'Vlad Murders', where each of the mortal victims have been drained of all their blood. The mortal authorities are calling for calm as the city media hounds stir up the herd with stories about Transylvania. Then inform one of the players that they are feeling strange, a feeling of unease that they cannot place their finger on. The feeling will last all night, and lessen the next evening when an invitation to attend the kindred Prince of the city arrives.

Upon arriving at the 'court' the characters will be surprised to see so many of the elders and important kindred in attendance. The Prince will waste no time in coming to the point. The sire of the uneasy player has died in a most unfortunate way, all the blood was removed, and diablerie is suspected. Evidence points to the player's coterie as prime suspects. For a start that item that they have been missing was found at the scene, and Annette L'Atrobe, a Ventruue of note claims to have seen the players leaving the sire's abode on the night in question. Another claims to have seen them in the vicinity of one of the 'Vlad' murders. So some fast talking will be needed to stop a blood hunt being called on the players for diablerie and breaking the masquerade. If they do save their necks then the truce will only be temporary as they are pledged to find the real perpetrators of the Vlad Murders

Tales of Old

If the players search the haven of the dead sire they will eventually find an item of interest. This is an old diary on a dusty bookshelf, written in Latin it dates around 1400AD. When the players manage to interpret it, it speaks of when the vampire was living in Rome and how he became involved with a strange man from Egypt, Aot te Raman. When he learnt that the man was a true immortal, he attempted to 'drink of power'.



Unfortunately he was not subtle enough, and Aot escaped swearing to destroy the leech and any of his line. In a running battle that lasted many months the vampire only succeeded in banishing Aot by the use of an ancient mystic charm, the Amulet of Karesh. He also kept Aot's heart hidden so the immortal could not return.

Aot however it seems has found a way to return, and his curse is being fulfilled. The players task now becomes saving themselves from two threats, the kindred and Aot. The most obvious way is to find the charm and once again banish the Mummy.

Missing Persons

If the players visit Annette's haven - a large and very private house - after their meeting with the Prince, they will find her absent, with her ghoul servant informing the players, after suitable incentive that "The lady is out. Busy entertaining a European gentleman, and in any case would not wish to speak with such vulgar characters".

Annette will not be located by the characters, now or ever. For she too has become a victim of the pattern killer. This will be brought to their attention either later that night or on the next by a messenger from the Prince. Inform the players that unless they can rapidly prove their innocence, their existence is forfeit.

Getting About

By now the players should have suitable incentive to travel to Rome to retrieve the artifact. Needless to say, travel there and back is likely to be difficult and dangerous, what with other vampires, and the police extra suspicious of strange travellers, as well as the usual problems of vampire travel.

All Roads Lead To...

Rome is not a comfortable place for most kindred. Being the seat of religious power for so many generations, it has acquired more than its share of people with strong faith in their God. As a result, few make the city their home. One of the main dangers in visiting the area around Rome is that the Society of Leopold are based there. Here more than anywhere they keep a vigilant watch for vampires. Some of their more talented practitioners of hedge magic can even detect their presence within a few kilometres. The area surrounding Rome is riddled with ancient tunnels, dating from around 100 to 400 AD. These catacombs provide both the Nosferatu and the Lupine of the area with shelter. Since neither enjoy the company of the other, fighting between the two groups is common, with many areas becoming 'no-persons-land' during lulls in the war.

The ruins of a 14th century Italian village about 500 meters from a tourist resort contain the foundations of the old home of the player's dead sire. The players should have no trouble locating it. Finding the hidden cellar wherein Aot's heart is sealed will prove more difficult. Once the location is found, the players will need a combined strength of 15 to open the floor. The entrance reveals a steep stone staircase that leads down into a system of natural caves that are filled with dry and stale air.

A search of these will eventually find a plain stone casket that holds a sealed ceramic jar encircled by the thong of an amulet of Egyptian origin. A successful Occult roll will reveal that the amulet is in some way affecting the jar. It is in fact hiding its presence from the mummy's Ka

Roman Wolves

If your players are finding travel a little too easy, or you just feel like giving them a hard time, let them have a run in with a Garu pack who live near the ruins of the vampire's old haven. The pack is of the Black Fury tribe, and will not take kindly to Wyrms infested foreigners trespassing on their turf. Add to that the fact that none of them speak the slightest bit of English, and the two groups should be perfectly set up for an evening of pleasant interaction.

Curse of the Mummy

Disturbing the jar will break the spell and allow Aot to locate his heart. Now in possession of the heart and amulet of Koresh, the players have the bait and the weapon, they only need a target. With these artifacts plus the diary they should be able to their innocence, but the danger of allowing Aot to exist should be inducement enough for the players to continue the hunt.

Aot is, however, an intelligent adversary and knows that he must retrieve his heart before the players return and present their evidence to the Prince where Tremere mages will easily discern the truth. He also knows that his possessed body

is rapidly deteriorating, so he must quickly choose the moment when the players are weakest to attack. Aot's primary objective is his heart, but if he can destroy any of the players, he will not hesitate to do so. In combat he will first use his Hekau powers, before resorting to physical combat. Destroying his body will limit Aot's Ka to performing poltergeist activity to release his frustration.

Unless the players use the Amulet of Karesh to destroy his heart, Aot will return at a later date, when he has recovered enough power. Any player with an Occult score of 3 or more should make a test to realise that they need access to a magic library (and 5 cumulative successes at 8+, with each search taking 1 day) to discover how to use the amulet. Casting of the spell will use 4 blood points from the caster, and drain 1 each from any kindred within 20 meters. Don't tell the players this till they cast it! It will, however, banish the heart and Aot from the player's world. As Mummy's have true eternal life, Aot is not dead, but consider him out of the game ...for now.

Back Home

Unless they handled their sessions with the Prince badly, or they have a complete lack of proof of their innocence, the players should be able to return to their abnormal lives. They may also have gained prestige in the court for defeating such a powerful foe. Enemies in the court will also most certainly have been made, with those siding against them having lost face. Not to mention the threat that Aot will return...

Mummy and Magician

Aot Te Raman

St-5(7) Dex-3 Sta-2(4) Man-5 Cha-2 App-2 Per-4 Int-5 Sek-80

Hekau-4, Necromancy-4, Amulets-3, Figurines-2

Naming the Eyes, Lungs destruction.

Command the Thinking, Animate Corpse

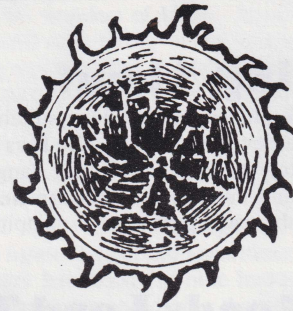
Alertness-3, Brawl-2, Dodge-2, Melee-3

Aot's last life was cut short, but not ended by the power of the Amulet of Karesh wielded by a vampire. As his spirit was set loose he made a vow to destroy this vampire and all of his line. He has now recovered enough Ba to allow him to reform, but the absence of his Ab (heart) prevents this. He has however learnt a variant of the animate dead spell that he has used to have physical effect on the world. In this way he began his elaborate revenge. First the murders, culminating in the death of the player's sire. He ensured their implication by planting one of their belongings at the scene. Then controlling and later killing Annette ensured suspicion centred on the players. Knowing that the players search for the amulet will lead him to his Ab, Aot refrains from attacking them before they discover it.

Aot is arrogant and haughty, showing contempt openly at any hint of stupidity or weakness. His possessed body feels little pain, with gunfire having little effect other than cosmetic (1 wound max), and has 12 effective wound levels, with no penalties for being wounded. The stats in brackets represent the influence of various amulets that he uses. Aot's hatred for the player's sire and all his line is intense and unreasoning. Even after banishment he will seek ways to end the existence of the players. If desired, Aot could become a recurring adversary in your chronicle.



BLOOD CIRCLE



Gladiatorial Lore in Dark Sun - by Seng A. Mah

I know of a man by the name of Alpius, a good man of virtuous character and bearing, Alpius was taken, much against his will, by friends to an afternoon's show at the arena. When they arrived, the place was seething with the lust for cruelty. Alpius shut his eyes tightly, determined to have nothing to do with these atrocities. If only he had closed his ears as well, for an incident in the fight drew such a great roar of appreciation from the crowd, and this thrilled him so deeply that he could not contain his curiosity. So he opened his eyes and his soul was stabbed with a wound more deadly than any which the gladiator, whom he was so anxious to see, had received in his body. When he saw the blood, it was a though he had drunk a deep draught of savage passion. Instead of turning away, he fixed his eyes on the scene and drank in all its frenzy.

Adapted from the *Confessions of St. Augustine*.

Thirsty for the blood of those slain under cruel aegis of the Dark Sun, the arenas of Athas are the cesspits of perversion, degradation and decadence. Yet, these iniquitous dens have their place in the structure of Athasian societies: sorcerer-kings use them as

both entertainment for the masses and a deterrent to those who would dare transgress their laws; after all, a good number of arena combatants originate from the criminal underclass.

More than this, arena combat is a crowd pleaser. Killing wields a great power over people's imagination and the sorcerer-kings certainly know how to keep the clamouring, disgruntled population content. In many ways, the petty regard of life in the arena reflects a dehumanised society and the lengths its members would go to satisfy their basest appetites.

This article serves to add spice, colour, variety and some historical realism to arena combat run in Dark Sun games. It works best set in Urik, Balic, Nibenay or Tyr (in the days prior to the fall of King Kalak), since these societies rather resemble the Etruscan-Roman culture on which the premise of the Dark Sun milieu is based. Gulag is too idiosyncratic to be suitable, while small changes will have to be made to the scenario if it is to be set in Drax or Raam as these cities differ somewhat culturally from the typical Dark Sun city-state.

The Amphitheatre

The inside of the arena is roughly 95 yards long and 60 yards wide, and is covered with rough, white sand. The tiers begin 20 feet above the arena, to keep the audience safe from wild beasts and gladiators; the walls leading up to them are covered with stone spikes and shards of obsidian to discourage climbers. The first rows of seats are for the rich and important. The sorcerer king (or queen) commands a special viewing box, attended to by high-level templars and half-giant guards. The next tiers seat the middle class (well-to-do artisans, mid level templars, merchants), while the tiers furthest away from the arena are the seats of the rabble.

Two entrances at the farthest ends of the arena lead off to staging areas maintained by either nobility or the sorcerer king. These house gladiators waiting for their turn in the arena. Located underneath the arena, they are cramped and badly ventilated; their close proximity to the animal pens don't help with the smell problem either. Some of these chambers are little more than cells within which gladiators are packed like sardines. Others - those



owned by richer people - are more spacious and offer some comfort to prized fighters. Before each new event, a group of templars enter the staging area and heal the participants selected for the upcoming game - no sense in displeasing the crowd with weak or wounded combatants.

Hatches along the longer sides of the arena lead off to animal enclosures, also beneath the amphitheatre. Animals penned here are driven into cages which are then hoisted to the floor directly below the arena. Here, the animals are driven up ramps or gangways through the hatches and into the arena to face expecting gladiators.

Gladiator Kits

Presented under Dark Sun rules, Gladiator appears to be an autonomous character class. Yet there are many different types or classes of gladiators, each with their own fighting styles, distinctive uniform, array of weapons and status in the gladiatorial hierarchy, depending on their size, strength and skill. The *hoplomachi*, for example, were the highest ranked gladiators, and the *bestiarii*, the lowest. Each class finds its own supporters in much the same way we fervently barrack for our favourite sports teams. In the arena, teams of gladiators from one group are set against gladiators from another. While the basic gladiator class as presented in the *Dark Sun* Rules book remains unchanged, DMs using the *Complete Fighters Handbook* might consider using these different types as gladiatorial kits.

Hoplomachus (plural: hoplomachi)

Description: The strongest and largest gladiators are trained as *hoplomachi*. They wear armour and carry heavy shields, are slow and limbering, and rely more on brute strength and their armour in combat. In many cities, *hoplomachi* comprise the mainstay of the sorcerer king's private army of bodyguards and assassins.

Requirements: Strength 17+, Con 16+, maximum Dexterity 15.

Qualifications: Only humans and muls can be *hoplomachi*. NPC *hoplomachi* are always at least 3rd level.

Arms and Equipment: Only the *hoplomachi* were allowed full battle regalia. This usually consists of a hardened leather cuirass and shoulder and shin guards (effective base AC 8). In some cases, armour of chitin is used for greater protection, though these tend to be very brittle and break when struck. *Hoplomachi* wear tremendous head-concealing helmets that enhance their already imposing appearance.

Non-Weapon Proficiencies: armour optimisation, blind fighting, endurance.

Special Abilities: All human



hoplomachi characters gain a +1 to their Str and Con due to the intensive body-building training they undergo. Their scores in these abilities can exceed 20.

Special Hindrances: Human or mul, *hoplomachi* characters deduct 1 from their Dexterity, due to size and bulk. All *hoplomachi* characters measure more than 6' tall and weigh more than 200 lbs. As such they are greatly feared by many, suffer a -2 to their reaction adjustment.

Murmillon (plural: murmillones)

Description: Similar to, but not as large as, the *hoplomachi* are the *murmillones*, also known as *secutors*. *Murmillones* are heavily armed though they lack the armour strength of the *hoplomachi*. Next to the *retiarii*, the *murmillones* are the most common gladiators.

Requirements: Strength 17+

Qualifications: Thri-kreens and halflings cannot become *murmillones*.

Arms and Equipment: *Murmillones* wield short, thick swords (*gladius*) or lances, usually of bone or obsidian. They also use large, rectangular shields. Their torsos are uncovered though they wear protective coverings on their right arms and massive greaves on their left legs (base AC 8). They also wear visored helmets, usually crowned with a crest or a tuft of erdlu feathers.

NWP: armour opt., blind fighting.

Special abilities: *Murmillones* are highly trained swordsmen; when attacking with swords one-handed they add +1 to their attack rolls.

Retiarius (plural: retiarii)

Description: The *retiarii*, or net-wielders, rank below all the other types of gladiators, save perhaps the *bestiarii*. They are the most lightly armoured of gladiators, and are prized more for their speed and agility than strength of arm. In combat, the *retiarius* darts about, evading his opponent's strokes even as he tries to entangle him with the net for which he is named. Of all gladiator classes, these have the shortest life expectancy - sword fodder.

Requirements: Dexterity 13+

Qualifications: None.

Arms and Equipment: The *retiarii* are intensively trained in the use of two specialist weapons, the trident and the net. *Retiarii* characters must specialise in these two weapons before others. In the arena their heads, chest and legs remain unprotected, though their left arms are bound in thick leather guards (AC 9).

Non-weapon Proficiencies: Rope use, Tumbling.

Special Abilities: Their training allow *retiarii* to attack with two-weapons (trident and net in the arena) so long as no heavier armour is worn. Note that specialisation in these weapons do not give extra attacks to this ability. The net does no damage though if the attack roll exceeds the required to hit number by 2, the opponent is tangled. Tangled opponents must save vs. paralysis each round to free themselves or lose their attacks for that round. Strength score bonuses are added to the save.

Bestiarius (plural; bestiarii)

Description: Bestiarii are gladiators specially trained to fight wild beasts and monsters, and are the lowest ranked of all the gladiator classes. Bestiarii fight unarmoured and with spears.

Requirements: Not all bestiarii are gladiators per se. Some are fighters with the skills described in this kit.

Qualifications: None.

Arms and Equipment The long-bladed animal spear wielded by the bestiarii, called the Venabulum, does 1d6+1 damage on small and medium opponents, and 2d4 on large ones. Bestiarii always specialise in the venabulum.

NWP: As well as animal killers, bestiarii are hunters and animal trainers and handlers, and possess these skills as non-weapon proficiencies.

Special Abilities: A bestiarius specialisation in the venabulum allows the use of it both as melee and thrown weapon. Bonuses for specialisation in each case are gained.

The Elite and the Dead

A gladiator's life is hard. Discipline is harsh and punishments severe. And yet, the gladiator believes himself belonging to a breed of man marked out by toughness and machismo from a predominantly weak population. The risk of injury and the shadow of death are simply accepted as a part of the making of the ultimate warrior.

Gladiator schools cater for the training of these warriors. The schools differ widely in size and organisation;

some are owned or sponsored by the local nobility, others are run by merchant houses, still others are maintained by the sorcerer kings. Living conditions in this school are very austere. The gladiators are treated roughly and training under veteran instructors is long and strenuous. Penalties for desertion and recalcitrance are severe; floggings and solitary confinement in small cells. Despite this, a gladiator's fitness is never neglected, he is fed a diet of barley, beans and meat, and has healers tending his wounds.

More importantly, training schools instil professional pride in these condemned men. Becoming a gladiator means belonging to a brotherhood of expert warriors. The brotherhood is based not so much on friendship and camaraderie, since many gladiators end up slaying their fellows, but on identity and professional dignity. All gladiators swear an oath upon entry to a training school; to submit to the scourge, to be burned with fire, and to be slain in the glory of a spectacle. Dying is somewhat of a cult among gladiators. Like the battle before it, death has to be met with style; it is the gladiator's final performance. "Anyone can live, but dying is an art," or so wrote a templar in charge of the maintenance and tutelage of the imperial stables.

Reality, of course, is considerably less aesthetic. At the end of each bout, slaves drag dead gladiators out of the arena with grappling hooks to a special room called the spoliarium. The bodies are stripped of armour and equipment,

which are then repaired for reuse. Unless claimed by relatives or companions, the corpses are tossed into the carnaria, a deep pit located near the arena. The carcasses of beasts slain in the arena also fill the carnaria.

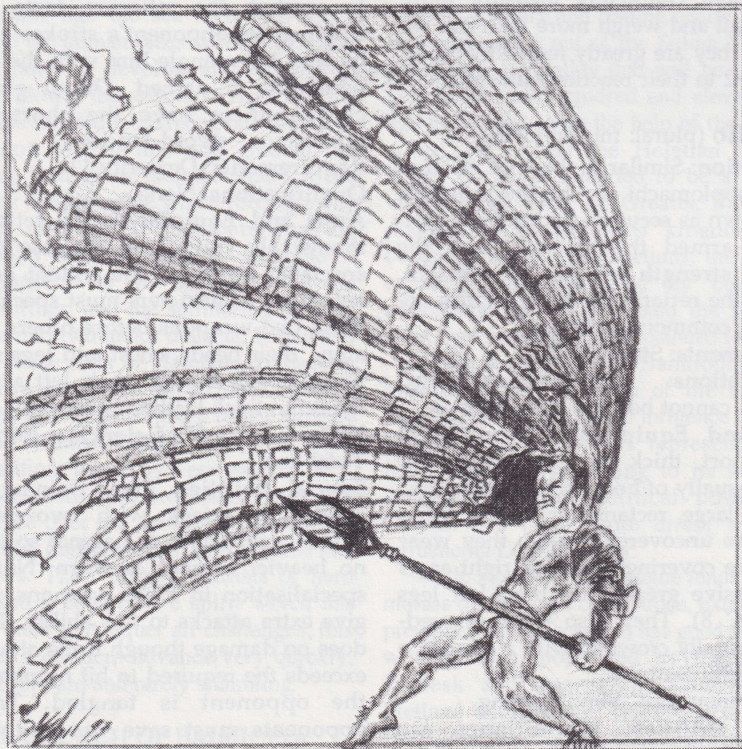
Despite this display of callousness and indifference to life, even in death, gladiators command great awe and respect. The public will pay for relics and clothing from dead gladiators, attributing them with mythical qualities such as good luck, success in the affairs of the heart, and ironically, longevity. The blood of freshly slain gladiators is widely believed to be a remedy for impotence. Even charms fashioned out of the preserved parts of gladiators are in high demand.

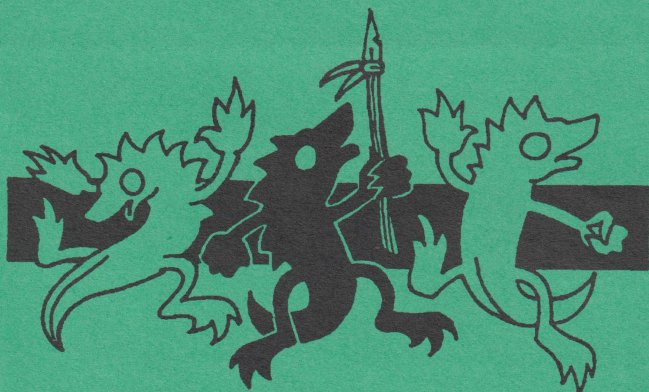
Profile of a Games Day

Arena games can run for as long as half a day, to weeks, even months, depending on the amount of money poured into it by sponsors and the sorcerer king, and the importance of the event it commemorates. In our world, the games commemorating the opening of the Colosseum in AD80 went on for 100 days of organised mass slaughter!

A typical games day starts with much music, several processions, a parade of gladiators and a host of other activities which culminate in the arena. The games themselves begin with minor events like bloodless and comically choreographed duels involving jozhals and halflings. Next come the matinees, where the condemned too weak or old to be recruited as gladiators fight to the finish, or are killed and eaten by beasts. Then come the main performances, announced by blasts of the war trumpet and horn, a succession of gladiatorial bouts which gain complexity as the day progresses culminating in a grand Trial of Champions where props stored in chambers underneath the arena are raised through well-hidden trapdoors beneath the sand.

Before each event the combatants march around the arena and then stand before the sorcerer king where they speak their pledge: "Hail great King, men soon to die salute you!" They are then handed weapons and armour by attendant slaves, and combat is initiated. A defeated gladiator not slain outright can appeal for mercy by discarding his weapon or shield, and then raising a finger of his left hand. In theory, it was the sorcerer king who decided the fate of the defeated, though in practice, the spectators often had the final say. This is an astute ploy on the part of the imperial bureaucracy; by giving the crowd this small taste of power and the illusion of democracy, the king strengthened their support of him and his policies, evil and oppressive though they might be. *





Lizards!

Lizards! is one of the growing new breed of Play-by-mail games (PBM) that are 100% computer moderated. There are 16 players in each game of **Lizards!** and each player controls a single Clan of lizards. These unfriendly little reptiles have developed a simple civilization of their own on a small watery world. Each lizard Clan seeks to dominate all of the "dry" land on their world. Naturally, this leads to a little conflict now and then!

Each turn, players may submit a maximum of 30 orders, selected from 15 types of orders available. On the due date, all player orders that have been received are processed simultaneously and the results (The Turn Report) mailed back to the players. Examples of which are shown on the following pages.

Each player begins **Lizards!** with a single Home Den and a number of other dens and lizards. The Clan Home Dens are spread more or less evenly over a randomly generated, 32 by 32, wrap-around hex map.

Each player's lizard Clan begins the game with one Home Den of great antiquity and tradition. Clan Home Dens are of enormous importance and a source of much prestige. No matter how many other dens a clan owns no recruit will join a Clan that has no Home Den.

Capturing the Home Den of other Clans is the main objective of **Lizards!**

The **Lizards!** world contains five species of lizard. Fortunately evolution has made identification of these species easy, as each is a *different* colour. Most of the lizard species possess a special ability. The lizard colours and their abilities are listed opposite.

• Red Lizards

These lizards are the most common, and do not possess any special ability other than mediocrity.

• Green Lizards

Green Lizards have developed the agricultural ability to fertilise and poison hexes and can construct simple rafts from tree trunks.

• Grey Lizards

Grey Lizards are natural builders and in sufficient numbers and given enough time, can build both rudimentary bridges and lizard Dens.

• Yellow Lizards

Yellow Lizards possess unusually strong arms, and can throw things a good distance, with lethal effect.

Black Lizards

Black Lizards are the most mysterious species and possess the ability to chant, causing occult effects. Black lizard chants are more or less powerful depending on how many of their fellows are nearby.

Objective of the Game

The first Clan to have a points total of more than 1000 points for each of the "Home Dens" remaining in the game is said to have gained "**Domination of the Swamp**" and the player controlling that Clan is the winner. At the start of the game 16000 points are required to win, but this number may be reduced as some Dens are wiped out in the vigorous pursuit of victory ■



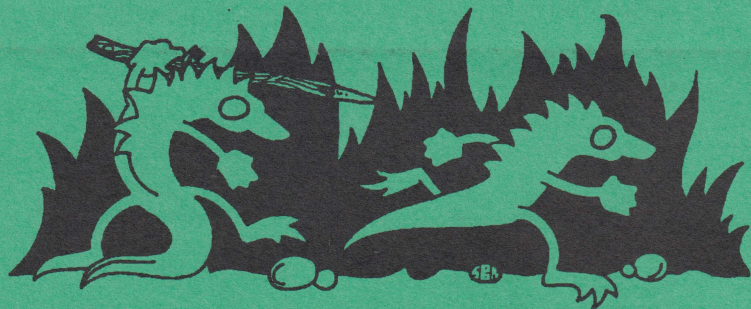
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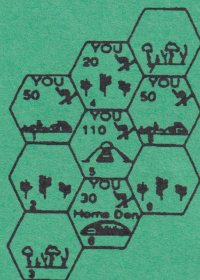
What to do First!

Below are four default start-up options numbered 1 through to 4. Choose one of these as your beginning situations. Indicate the number of your preferred choice in the entry coupon attached. Please note that if no start-up selection is indicated your start-up will be allocated option 3 as a default.

On the default views, the hexes denote 'YOU' contain your starting lizard forces and dens. The three letter code will be replaced by your clan abbreviation on subsequent maps. The name of your clan can be up to 20 characters long. It should be imaginative and colourful. So, give it some thought. Remember also, this name will be abbreviated to three letters for positional notations on turn maps. Once you have chosen the type of position you desire, fill out and send the entry form over page to us at Roma Games.

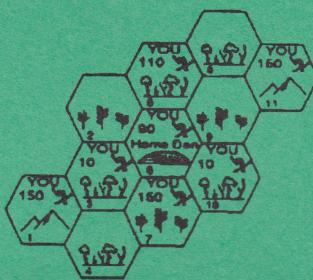
DEFAULTS

1 Black Home Den



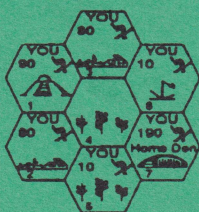
1: 50 GRY
2: 30 DEN
3: 100 RED
4: 20 GRN
5: 110 BLK
6: 50 GRY

2 Red Home Den



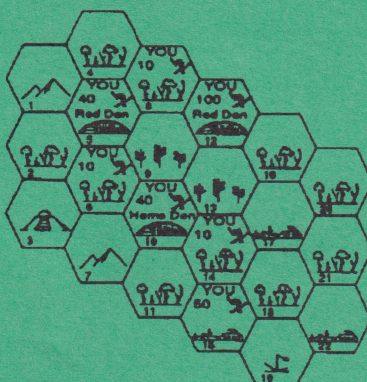
1: 100 RED, 50 GRY
2: 100 RED, 10 GRN
3: 10 GRN
4: 100 RED, 50 GRY
5: 100 RED, 10 GRN
6: 90 DEN
7: 100 RED, 50 YEL
8: 10 GRN
9: 100 RED, 50 GRY
10: 10 GRN
11: 100 RED, 50 GRY

3 Yellow Home Den



1: 90 RED
2: 10 GRN, 50 GRY, 10 YEL, 10 BLK
3: as 2
4: 10 GRN
5: 10 RED
6: 10 GRN
7: 50 DEN, 80 RED, 10 YEL, 50 BLK

4 Grey Home Den



1: 30 DEN, 10 RED
2: 10 GRN
3: 10 GRN
4: 30 DEN, 10 RED
5: 30 DEN, 10 RED
6: 30 DEN, 70 RED
7: 50 GRY
8: 10 GRN
9: 10 GRN
10: 10 GRN
11: 10 GRN
12: 10 GRN
13: 10 GRN
14: 10 GRN
15: 10 GRN



Den



Ruin



Plains



Swamp



Scrub



Fertile



Peak



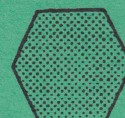
Volcano



Temple



Cursed



Water



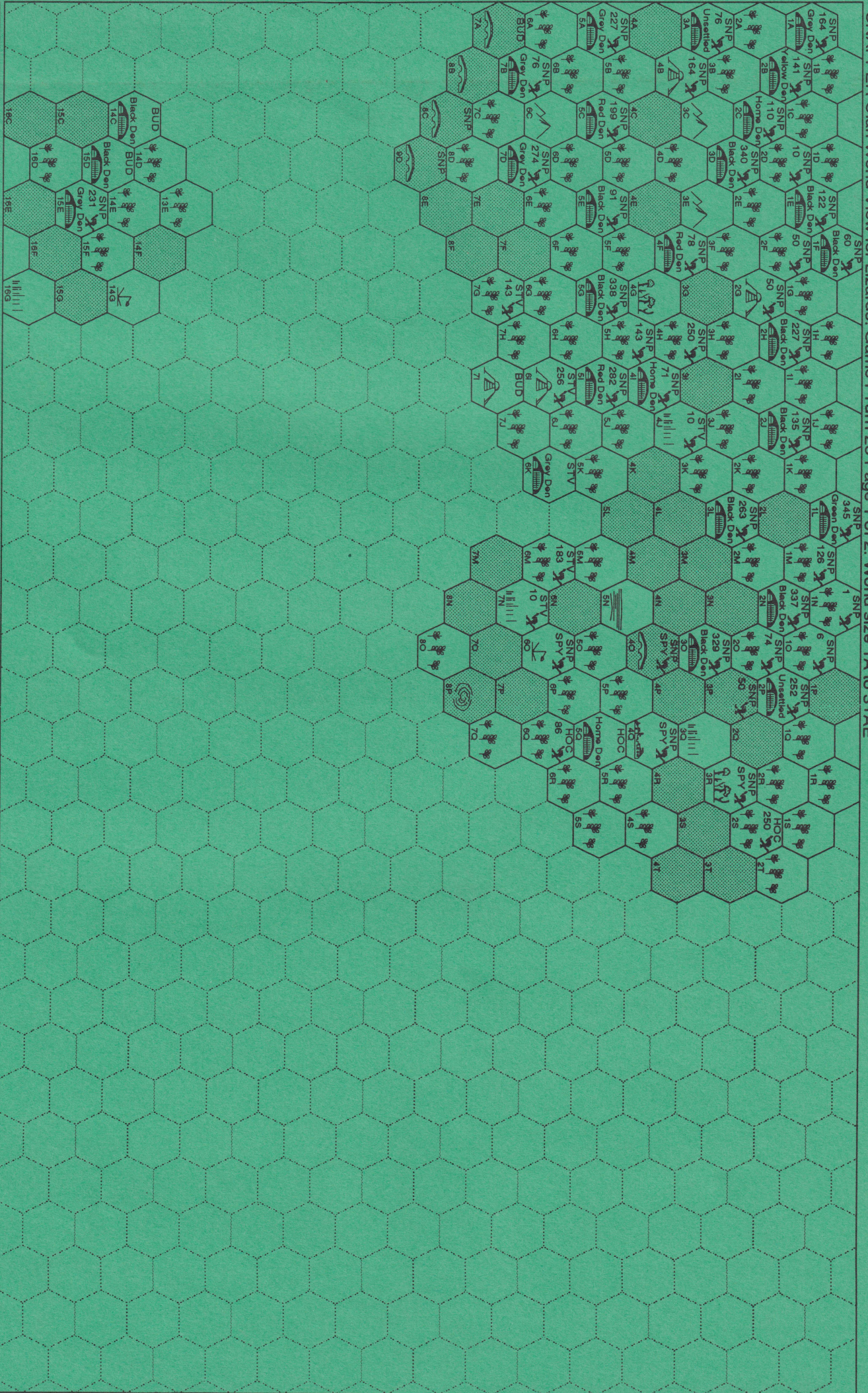
Whirlpool



Raft



Bridge



Lizards! Legend:





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If you like what you have seen, from the small sample we were able to show you here, drop us a line by either writing to the postal address below or call us directly on the number provided. There will always someone on hand to help. Ask about one of our other popular PBM games and I can assure you will not be disappointed. As a special introductory offer to **Lizards!** we are offering 3 free turns with every \$5.00 set up. That's right! Normally for a setup and 3 turns you would expect to pay \$28.00 but for a limited time you pay only \$5.00. All you have to do is fill out the registration coupon below. It's just that easy.

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Cut here

Name	
Address	
Clan Name	
Startup Option*	1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ *Please indicate your preference. If no selection is made the default is 3.

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Another quality PBM brought to you by Roma Games Lizards! licenced by Circle Games NZ. Lizards! remains a registered trade mark of Circle Games NZ.

Letters

PO BOX 220, MORLEY, WA, 6062

This issue's talking point is the Unae world, Realm's own fantasy setting. We are pleased to say it seems everybody wants to be in on the project...

Ken Ray
Woden, ACT

Dear Nick & the Australian Realms Crew,
Saw issue 10 in the local newsagent, and bought it out of curiosity. I have been playing D&D since it was just D&D - the initial three booklets by "E. Gary Gyax and Dave Arneson" - probably 15 or 16 years, so I always look at magazines.

I agree - the foreign mags are too overpriced for what they are - house publicity for their games. I must say I was impressed with the production quality of issue 10 - excellent quality for \$5.

To Colin Taber - "Winds of Change" looks great. Can't wait to see the next few parts. The concept seems to be pretty close to how our D&D group has evolved our playing style - lots of sociopolitical interaction. In one campaign (we have three running, various people DM for a few months at a time) we have managed to take over the regional government; the world of politics and business beats a hack and slash any day!

Anyways, congratulations on an excellent publication, I am looking forward to many more.

Thanks, Ken. We aim to fulfil your wishes - there will be more Unae material (see elsewhere this issue) and we will be striving to put out many more 'excellent' issues. Let me take this opportunity to invite all our readers to join us in play testing the Unae campaign. Start now and you can have a positive influence on its future direction.

Adam Spargo
Herne Hill, WA

Dear Mr. Leaning,

I am interested in writing articles for the Unae campaign world. I wish to introduce the Elvish nation of Wairanir, which has been mentioned in earlier issues of Australian Realms. I like the idea of a world not created by the gaming companies, but by the people who buy the worlds, the public. I hope I will be able to contribute to the Unae world.

So do we Adam. We are compiling a list of names and addresses of people who are interested in writing Unae material. If other readers want to be on this list (so we can allocate work) just let us know. The only other thing we need from new writers is proof of your ability, please send in a brief sample with your request for Unae guidelines and don't forget a SSAE).

Dustyn Fry
Pithara, WA

Dear Australian Realms,

Hi, I saw your issue 10 in the newsagent, it looked like a fantasy magazine so I grabbed it. When I got home I saw it was about RPG (which I've never heard of). As I don't want to stop buying your magazine can you please tell me what RPG is all about so I can get a RPG club going. Also I need people for my comic network, a club for anyone interested in: comics, fantasy, and other things like this. So write to me: Dustyn Fry, Glenside, Pithara, WA 6608.

Dustyn, it is very encouraging for us at Realms to find that we are responsible for introducing new people to our hobby - it is a large part of what we are about.

Apart from reading our magazine the best way to learn about Role Playing Games is to find a group of people who are already involved in it, join them and watch. You can start by putting up notices in local shopping malls, the newsagent window, at the community centre and local high schools advertising that you are looking for a RPG group to join.

Inspired by your letter, we are planning to run another article on 'What is RPG' in the near future (a similar article appeared back in issue #3).

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Attention to all players and followers of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons. The first official AD&D Games Tournament will be held on the last weekend of June '93 at Cryall Castle in Ballarat, Victoria. A grand PRIZE and TITLE will be awarded to the character or party that completes the tournament. All character types, races and classes are welcome.

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FROM THE REALMS CAMPAIGN OF UNAE THE KRAMER CONFEDERATION

By Glenn Oakes & Colin Taber

I have seen the Kramer cities, I have trod their crowded streets. They are nothing compared to the towering pillar cities of Wair-Rae. The Heletians believe they are the masters of Dormetia. Soon they will taste the bitterness of truth.

-Forwao, Elven Charlatan

DORMETIA

The region of Unae (say Oo-nay) we are concerned with here is known as Dormetia. It is bordered by the Elven island of Wair-Rae to the west, nomad haunted deserts to the south, an often frozen ocean to the north, and a dividing sea to the east. The heart of Dormetia is the Maroklaran Sea, a relatively sheltered expanse of navigable water that has shaped the peoples of Dormetia, in particular the Flets of Fletland, the Prabesk of Medina and the Heletians.

HELETIAN HISTORY

Millennia ago the sea level was much lower and the human races of the region had enough land to develop and expand in comfort. Slowly the seas have risen and the vast plains flooded (stabilising one thousand years ago). Whilst this was gradual the shrinking land mass isolated many tribes from their own peoples, whilst forcing many clashing cultures to compete for the increasingly crowded land. An example of this separation is the scattering of the Heletian tribes, and the splintering of their language into two major dialects, Sidian and Maran. These sites of Heletian civilisation have grown; slowly city-states became kingdoms and these forged a larger alliance called the Heletian League, a group of eight distinct nations joined by a common culture.

The Heletians have prospered, rising into prominence over the past six centuries, but in particular during the last one hundred and fifty years. Their history consists of hard battles and a competitive spirit which has enabled them to conquer all challenges, this spirit has seen them advance very quickly, charging forward and rarely stumbling.

THE CHURCH OF BAIMIOPIA

The most important and unifying part of Heletian culture is the Church of Baimiopia. The church is the state religion of the

League and of all member nations; its bishops, priests and missionaries having real power over the affairs of every Heletian, from the smallest of peasant villages to the largest of cities. The church is centred in Baimiopia, capital of the strongest Heletian state - Greater Baimiopia. The city was founded by Baimio, the mortal incarnation of the Heletian tribal god, Krienta, four hundred and ninety three years ago on the Sidian River in the heart of Greater Baimiopia. While the church is all powerful, it does have weak areas, where the local populations or governments are to varying degrees turning their backs on the Church's wisdom, the most prominent example of this is the second largest League state, the Kramer Confederation. Here many follow the canonised Saints, led by local Bishops not entirely in step with the Church; whilst allowed, reverence of the Saints does weaken Baimiopia's hold on the faithful.

THE HELETIAN LEAGUE

One cannot talk of the Heletian League without talking about Greater Baimiopia. This is the most powerful of the Heletian member states. It is a spiritual, academic, cultural, military and trading centre. Greater Baimiopia grew out of the Sidian Valley, a vast fertile rift valley that will be explored next issue. Two hundred and eleven years ago it founded (with the help of the Kramer cities and Lixus) the Heletian League. While no doubt intended to be a tool by which King Troy of Greater Baimiopia planned to absorb other kingdoms and become King of the Heletians, the League came to be dominated by conniving merchants and never gained the political clout that the monarch had planned for it.

While the Church of Baimiopia is the only recognised religion of the Heletian League it has little official influence over the League Council which represents each member nation according to its strength. Although without political power, the Church has other more direct ways of influencing League policy.

While internally the League tends to be a morass of deals and corruptions, externally it presents a stable facade. It has good relations with Medina, populated by the foreign Prabesk and improving relations with Fletland and Burvoy. Wair-Rae, or as the Heletians call it Wairanir is treated very cautiously as the knowledge of the elven genocidal campaign against the Fletlanders is widespread.

THE KRAMER CONFEDERATION

The history of the Kramer Confederation reads at a glance as one of battles against the ogre clans and goblin tribes who originally occupied the forests and swamps of the area. Once these enemies were pushed back into the mountains the tale becomes one of trade and piracy. Underneath this is an intricate web of political deals and corrupt schemes which taint the entire Confederation.

The Confederation as a whole is governed by a council of seven - one representative from each city-state. They meet irregularly in the city of Vangre to discuss trade policies. All parties have agreed to come to the defence of one another in time of war, but within this supposed unity power plays unfold, secret agreements are made and broken and times change.

The Kramer Confederation enjoys good relationships with all nations in the area (its good for business). Its relationship with the Church of Baimiopia is another matter, ties are often strained. Unlike Greater Baimiopia which is governed by nobles, most of the Kramer cities are controlled by merchants, and most of these successful merchants don't have time to pray -time is *florins* (gold silver and copper). While most merchants do worship Saint Romeo, saint of wealth and trade, this often consists of a prayer (or exclamation) after finalising good business. The Kramer Confederation cities are quite tolerant of foreign faiths, while in rural areas they will usually be allowed, but alienated. The exception to this is the followers of the Horned God, adherents to any of that God's dozens of *Kults* will be tried for heresy.

This toleration of the unusual is also reflected in the popular view of magic. In the cities people are curious and casting in public will no longer get one killed, but in the country suspicion will take over and cries of "Witchery! Bedevilment!" will soon create a mob prepared to carry out burnings. The Confederation, while liberal in its views of magic is still largely ignorant of how it works and the mage's organisation, known as the *Cabal*. The Cabal is a dark, devious brotherhood that all mages owe allegiance to, a place where conspiracies are planned and hatched. In more conservative Heletian nations the Cabal is treated as a threat as large as that posed by the followers of the Horned God, and this opinion is valid. But to the ignorant authorities it appears as just another 'guild'. The Heletian Cabal has one public office in the Kramer Confederation, this is in Portre.



KRAMER SOCIETY

The culture of the cities is in contrast to that of the countryside. The cities are very progressive, quick to take on the new and what some would call 'decadent'. The rural areas are more conservative; here the Church of Baimiopia is stronger and traditional values don't change.

Outside the crowded cities, the lands are sparsely populated; many hundreds of small hamlets and a few market towns dot the fertile valleys and rivers. Beyond these are dangerous wilds where the ogre clans cling tenaciously to the last of their domains. With the exception of Zarustra's rural ward all other farming communities have to protect themselves from bandit or ogre raids.

THE MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Kramer Confederation consists of seven separate and autonomous city-states: Eamastou, Midullis, Destu, Vangre, Zarustra, Tusmero and Portre. Each city-state and its surrounds are unique in their cultural, social and political

make up and will be discussed individually.

The population of the region is predominantly Heletian with one exception. Serhaem, an elven city which is an associate member, who annexed land within the Confederation two hundred and thirty years ago. Serhaem is home to the largest enclave of elves outside of Wair-Rae (or its Kalraith colonies) in Dormetia.

SERHAEM

Serhaem is both a part of the Kramer Confederation and Wair-Rae, the powerful Elven homeland. Only elves live in the city of 20,000 and on the coastal farmland. The reason for this is that Heletians have been banned from living in the elven city-state and its expanding territories. This ban is under pain of death, while never announced as law, all neighbouring Heletians know it to be truth. Non-Elven sailors delivering goods to Serhaem are not permitted to leave the Heletian Quarter which adjoins the docks. The only exception to this rule applies to diplomats, merchant house members and

anyone else that Prince Celien of Serhaem decides is important. But, even visiting dignitaries are kept under constant watch.

The elven city-state is more tolerant of outsiders than their brothers and sisters in Wair-Rae. Even the elves need to trade, and the best way into the Heletian League States is through the Kramer Confederation.

Serhaem has very little produce of its own for export. It ships most of its imports from Wair-Rae and then exports a variety of elven goods to the other Kramer cities through Heletian merchants.

Serhaem is part of High King Caemarou's plans for Dormetia. Elven colonists have been moving out slowly from Serhaem since its establishment. Building their own farming villages, often on the still warm ashes of Heletian villages. This program of expansion has been greatly sped up over the past four years, sending enough Heletian survivors to Zarustra for word to have filtered through to the back rooms of the Kramer Confederation Council.

Serhaem is governed by a token council of five who are monitored by Prince Celien, third son of High King Caemaru, ruler of Wair-Rae. Celien rarely vetoes a decision made by the council, as he is content sitting in his palace eating, wenching and tapestry weaving. Suffice to say, he is not the High King's favourite son. He is, however, an ambitious ruler who, in light of Serhaem's growing power, plans to announce its independence from Wair-Rae. His father is well aware of his plans and has planted informants to watch his activities.

Serhaem has a large population of mages, at least fifty of various abilities. While these mages are not included in the tally of mages quoted for the Kramer Confederation they are still a powerful and important force. They also operate under the jurisdiction of the Wair-Rae Cabal having little contact with the Heletian branch of the same group.

EAMASTOU

Eamastou is one of the smaller city-states within the Kramer Confederation. The city and the land surrounding it are under the control of an 'elected' governor. In reality, however, the island is tightly controlled by the Meloni family.

The Meloni family led by Daon Meloni make their money from protection rackets, gambling houses, brothels, alcohol, drug trafficking, smuggling and many other activities. The governor turns a blind eye toward the family's enterprises, being too weak to stop such a powerful and feared organisation. Those who have questioned the role of the family in Eamastou in the past have simply disappeared. Some of the missing people have eventually turned up, regurgitated by one of the hundreds of bogs in the shunned Jorari Marsh, just outside the four hundred year old city of 22,000.

The Church of Baimiopia hates the Meloni Family with intense passion, as within the heavily guarded Meloni estate is a supposed 'miracle worker'. Rumours abound about a young girl who can perform fantastic

divine acts. The Bishops want to get their hands on this girl to ensure that her powers - if they exist - are put to the church's use. She is known locally as Saint Elisabetta, while she has not been canonised and therefore is not a recognised Saint of the Church her followers already number in the thousands.

Eamastou is thriving economically, especially in its exporting of certain illegal substances such as Black Leaf and Lobeel Roots to the mainland. No other Kramer state deals with narcotics on such a scale, so Eamastou, due to Daon Meloni's highly organised smuggling scheme has a virtual monopoly. Shipping these goods has proved a problem in the past, but with the help of the Pirates of the Maroklara Sea this hurdle has been overcome. In fact, the arrangement has worked so well that the Meloni Family have 'convinced' the government to allow disguised pirate vessels to lay anchor in their ports. In return, the pirates have agreed not to attack vessels flying the flag of Eamastou.

The other city-states aren't happy with this arrangement, as they believe that goods plundered from their ships are being off loaded at Eamastou and then being re-exported by legitimate Eamastou vessels. No one, however, has accused the Meloni's directly, as all are wary of their long-reaching arm.

MIDULLIS

Midullis is renowned for its agricultural exports. With the help of advanced food preservation techniques that employ several Alchemists food is preserved for months, enabling the fine foodstuffs to be shipped to just about every trading post in Dormetia. The exact technique is a closely guarded secret, but it is rumoured amongst the common population that it involves the use of spellcasting. For this reason the preserved food isn't too popular with Heletian peasants and most religious orders.

Midullis is run by guilds representing farmers, academics, fishermen, the Church and merchants. There are fifteen such organisations all with their own goals and agendas. Suffice to say, decision-making is a lengthy process. The current Urbestro is Giorgio Guardi of the Shipping Guild.

Midullis houses 27,000 people with a further 70,000 farming the lush pastures along the Sopiri River. Being inland it has only a small fleet, relying upon the support of other Kramer states in times of conflict such as the Pirate Wars of a hundred years ago. Midullis protects its land holdings with inadequate and poorly equipped militias.

This lack of protection has resulted in the arrival of radical members of the Baimiopia Church who have tried to convert the population to more orthodox, radical factions of the Church. These missionaries are well received in the rural areas around Midullis as they speak against witchery, foreigners, ungodliness and rally the people against goblin raiders and bandits. While such radicals (identified by the purple sashes many choose to wear) have very little success in the city, they have made

significant inroads into the countryside.

It is rumoured in the Church that the Cabal is quite active in Midullis, via the Alchemists who also dabble in magic. Consequently the Church is taking more and more interest in the city, its people and its 'miraculous' food preservation techniques.

DESTU

Destu is the only city-state that doesn't include agricultural products on its manifest. The city-state consists of two small islands, which have been settled for the past six hundred years. There are enormous deposits of iron, copper and tin, there are also smaller but quality veins of gold and silver.

Destu is ruled by three people, each of whom heads one of the three Ore Merchant Houses operating on Destu. These are Francesco Respighi of 'Respighi and Sons', Marco Giotto of the 'Destu Ore Company' and Madonna Bellini of the 'Kramer Ore Merchants' company. It is rumoured that Madonna Bellini practices magic, trying to gain financial benefits from the dark arts, this is the subject of a Church enquiry.

The people of Destu are unhappy and overworked. Conditions in the hundreds of mines which worm the landscape are terrible; most of the island's 15,000 miners are destined to die prematurely. The three rulers keep the population under control with large militias staffed by well paid soldiers. Only Respighi and Sons treat their workers with any decency; the other miners resent their better pay and conditions.

The practice of religion is heavily regimented and controlled by a group of corrupt priests. The local Benefice of the Church is completely in league with the three rulers and feed the population all sorts of lies to maintain the status quo. Amid this corrupt system move several *renegades*; priests who have discovered the perversion of their superiors and decided to fight back. The Jade Order have gained converts, but public burnings of these renegades (labelled as 'Heretics' by the Church) and their followers have kept many more from joining their ranks. It is rumoured that Kults of the Horned God use old mines for their rituals.

VANGRE

Vangre is the largest of the eight city-states within the Kramer Confederation. This is reflected in its population of over 100,000 and its boisterous economy. Vangre is ruled through a Senate of twenty one, whose members are taken from the most powerful merchant houses of the city, inheriting their Senatorial status. The ruler of the city is known as the *Reganto*, and is chosen by the Senators every five years. The current Reganto is Vincenzo Heletiano.

The primary exports of Vangre are rare timbers, ships and textiles. A small island off the south-east coast of Vangre contains the areas only Black Gold (oil) springs. The Black Gold is transformed into a variety of products, ranging from high-grade lamp oil to hellfire, an inflammable weapon of war.

Vangre has the largest fleet of the

Kramer Confederation. Its vast wharves are one of the wonders of Unae - thousands of multi-hued sails flutter in the breeze like a moving tapestry. The coastal city is located a few days travel from a shunned valley where a large and horrific battle was fought four hundred and fifty six years ago between Darner Ogres and the Heletians. While the ogres were defeated the valley is thought to be haunted, nightfall brings strange lights, sounds and apparitions.

Vangre has stood for nine hundred and eighty four years and during that time been razed on eight occasions. The current city is built on top of several layers of 'old city' and it is in this network of subterranean streets, sewers and ruined buildings that various evils can be found. The thieves guild uses parts of these levels, having to share them with the likes of Horned God Kultists, goblin raiders and a Necromancer known as Pietro Carra who has sealed the tunnels under Vangre's cathedral for his own use.

ZARUSTRA

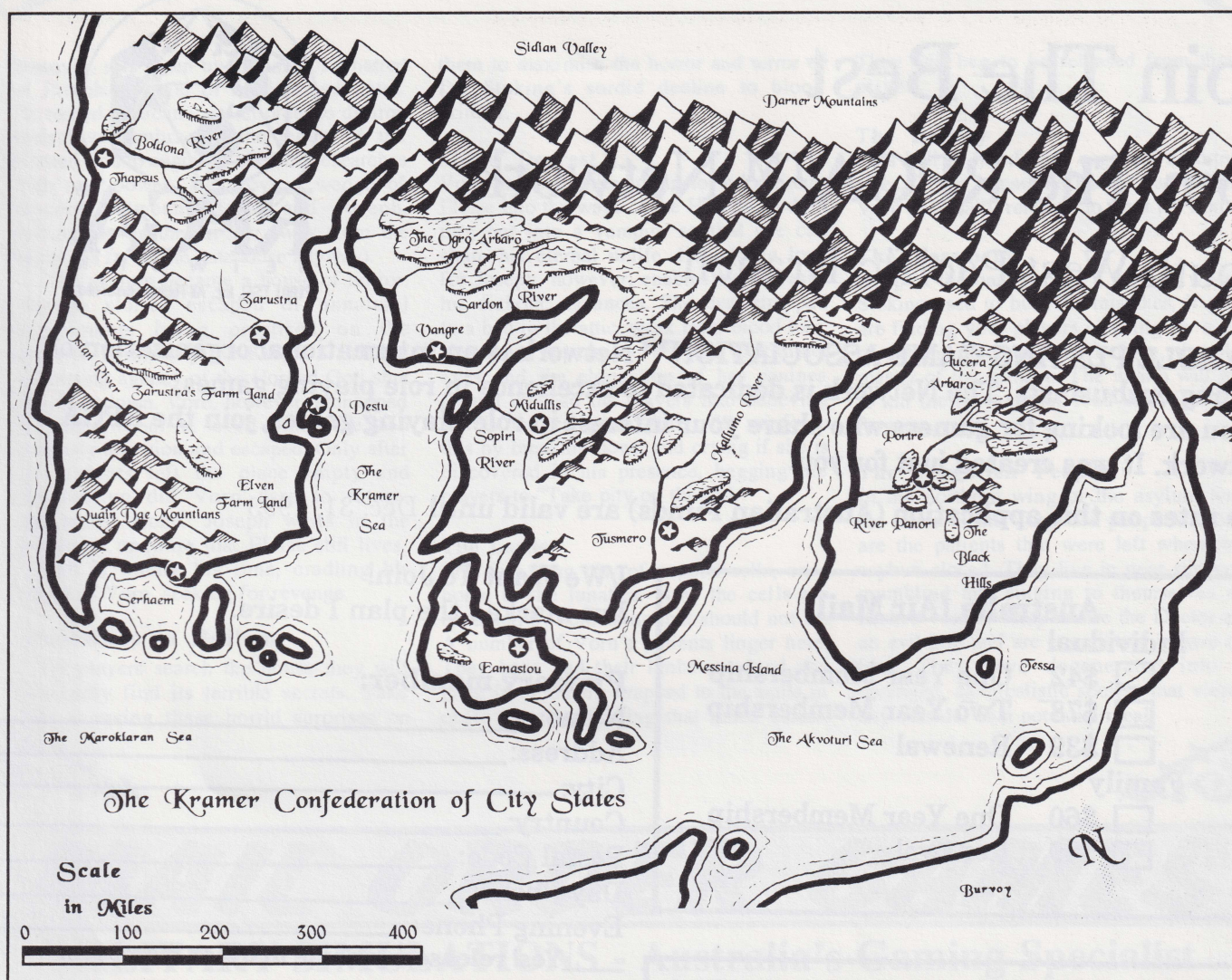
Zarustra is ruled by a retiring Knight known as *Kavaliro* Carpaccio who lives a life of seclusion in a heavily guarded keep overlooking the city. The population is fairly content, as they are free to make money in just about any way they see fit. The streets of the city are well patrolled and crime is only a minor problem in comparison to similar sized ports. Zarustra itself houses over 35,000 and can claim another 60,000 living in its territories upon claimed farm land along the coast to the west. Large herds of sheep and cattle supply the whole of the Kramer Confederation with red meat and vast fields of wheat and barley supply the hungry populations with grain. This land has been the subject of many disputes with the city of Thapsus, of Greater Baimiopia.

Zarustra has only a relatively small military fleet, but the largest of land-based forces. The majority of these troops are garrisoned in the north to protect their farm land from outside invasion by Greater Baimiopia which have been repelled on two occasions in the past century.

TUSMERO

Tusmero is the black sheep of the Kramer family. It is home to thieves, pirates and outlaws, but also to Kramer's finest artists and crafts people. These artisans turn out a variety of specialised goods, ranging from perfumed oils to works of art and high quality weapons and armour. Tusmero is run by a merchant prince, head of the ancient Maloro family, Gianni. Baron Gianni is a patron of the arts and sympathetic to elvish culture.

The city is a violent place, safe for only those who can afford to bribe the city's officials or are capable of protecting themselves. Something is not quite right in Tusmero, the city has an alarmingly high disappearance rate. Many doors and windows are heavily bolted. The streets are



all but deserted at night. Dawn's light sometimes reveals an alleyway slick with wet blood. Farmers visiting the city tell tales of strange happenings - cattle mutilations, distant chanting in the dead of night, even of the very earth itself rumbling. Some say the followers of the Horned God are to blame, others say some dark horror has risen from the bowels of Unae.

Radical sections of the Church of Baimiopia are compiling a list of names of those who have gone missing from Tusmero's streets. Currently this list holds fifty three names, and while twenty names are those of prostitutes many others belong to travellers and other innocents. The Church intends to make an example of the 'ungodly' city of 25,000, marking the city for the wrath of Krienta.

PORTRE

Portre is the youngest of the Kramer States, formed only two hundred years ago. Vast fields of coal ensure that its place in the Confederation will be guaranteed for quite some time. It was originally a desolate valley, home to a small colony of banished mages. However, news of the discovery of black coal attracted miners and merchants from Destu and other cities. Today, the city boasts just over 30,000 inhabitants.

Portre is still controlled by a quorum of four mages, one of whom is said to be over three hundred years old. It is home to the largest school of magic in the Confederation, and also has two colleges for learning - one of these, the Panori University teaches history, astrology, alchemy and a strange thing called science. Many wealthy families and nobles send their children to Portre to be educated. It is the most magic saturated city in the entire Heletian League, with over thirty apprentices and twenty four mages. The mages who rule the city go by the name of 'The Quorum' as they have not revealed their true names; the name of a mage grants power over the spell caster.

HORRORS IN THE KRAMER

While many battles were fought to secure the lands now considered to be a part of the Kramer Confederation, many horrors still lurk in the deep forests of the area. Ruined ogre fortress-towns deep in the forest are often claimed by goblin tribes who have been stealthful enough to avoid bounty hunters. But some fortress-towns have never been deserted, two are known to be in the forest north and east of Vangre. The foothills of the Darner Mountains also hold many unpleasant beasts, the mountains themselves are fully the domain of the ogre

clans, with the only notable exception being the mountains near Zarustra.

MAGIC - THE KRAMERIAN CABAL

Magic is practised in all of the Kramer Confederation cities. Spell casters in the whole region number no more than one hundred (excluding pirates and elves) plus some one hundred and thirty apprentices. The people of the Kramer Confederation are learning to overcome old superstitions and embrace the use of magic once again.

RUMOURS

It is well known that tension is building between the Greater Baimiopian city of Thapsus and the Kramer city of Zarustra over the western farmland. While Thapsus is by no means the most powerful of Greater Baimiopia's cities it is somewhat of a royal favourite and this dispute doesn't look like it will go away quickly. Other happenings include a secret Church investigation into the true intentions of the elves of Serhaem, sponsored by the Bishop of Vangre. Portre's plans of incorporating Tessa (see issues 10 & 11) into its dominion and the Meloni family's expansion of its operations into Vangre.

The year is 513EK *Encarnigo Krienta*. ☼

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CLUBBIN'

By Brad Smart

Gaming Clubs are an important element of the role playing scene in any city. They represent the core of the gaming community and are forums where gamers can sample numerous RPG's and table top systems before outlaying big dollars in what may be (without a sample session) an unwise investment. Clubs are found easily by asking for meeting times or contact numbers at gaming stores. Most universities have official guild supported clubs, many private clubs also exist, meeting at scout, P&C, civic and church halls across Australia every weekend.

What a Club Should Be

This is a difficult question to answer in definite terms. What a club should be is a place to go and meet new people and enjoy yourself. What one club likes another may hate, obviously this makes neither right nor wrong, it makes them *different*. Basically a club should be an open area to play whatever game the people want to play, it shouldn't be dominated by one person (or group) in regard to rooms, mess, duties, music/noise and order. If a club is to work *well* you must involve every person who is a member in the running of the club. Keeping things friendly and welcoming for new members also helps - there is nothing worse for a newcomer than to be completely ignored; each meet, assign someone to look after guests. A club should be run by a committee and it should be elected annually; clubs do operate better when democracy is ignored (you avoid the politics), but to do this the committee must be *very* dedicated and hard working.

Where to Get a Hall From

If you are a public club (i.e. not affiliated with a university or shop) your best options for arranging a hall are with the local council. If you approach them as a 'youth' group or push the point that you are a community group you can get away with a heavily discounted fee for the hall hire. Most halls are rented for about \$5-\$15 an hour, depending on the facilities. If you can get a hall for about \$20 a day you are looking at a viable meeting place. To get this rate depends solely on how you sell yourselves. Needless to say the best time to approach the council (or preferably a Councillor) is at local election time, when you have thirty voters awaiting their generous decision and they your votes.

Other options are public libraries which often have separate rentable community rooms, public schools who may rent classrooms, libraries, staff rooms or P&C halls. Whether you are in an old cinema or a church it is extremely important for the club to look after the premises, this means cleaning thoroughly after every meet and possibly donating things such as tables. Once a club is evicted, word spreads...

How to Get New Members

Getting new members is not difficult for a new club, put posters up at local game shops (most have a notice board) but check that they allow it. Some shops sponsor the clubs, and most offer a discount for club members. Other effective ways to attract members are to tell as many gamers you know and contact Australian Realms which can list you on their irregular club listing (this service is free). You could also arrange for paid advertising in community newspapers or Realms. What is important, once you've got new members, is keeping them; respect peoples rights to hold opinions, allow differing playing styles and be tolerant of unique personalities.

When to Meet

As a guide most clubs meet weekly. It is necessary to meet regularly so people know when the next meet is and for continuity of the games. Most clubs meet weekly for around eight hours or more, this allows for two 'sessions' of play which is generally used so people can play in two different campaigns. 12am to 8pm on a Saturday is ideal, most people should be available for these hours.

What is to be Played

This can only be answered by the members. Most clubs have regular campaigns running for the more 'popular' systems such as Shadowrun, AD&D, Warhammer and Battletech. It is important that these campaigns are open for new people to join, so if you are planning on refereeing a game be prepared for a high turnover or timeshare campaign. The real beauty of clubs is the opportunity they afford to play in different or less 'popular' games; this broadens the players experience and gives these lesser games a chance to grow.

Unforeseen Problems

Security - If you have any trouble, for example drunken fools, contact the police in the first instance, but be ready as a group to defend yourselves. Strength is in numbers, don't desert each other.

Drugs - Any police involvement with your club and drugs will ruin your club, **don't** let it happen.

Insurance - If the premises insurance doesn't cover you can only get insurance if you incorporate the club; this does cost. The only other option is run the club on trust, that is, if someone has an accident they agree not to sue the club or committee members. The best thing is to ensure all activities are safe.

Covering Costs

Most club's meeting charge are set to simply cover their rent. For example, if you are going to have 15 people in a day and the rent is \$30 charge \$2 each. A rough guide of what annual membership you should charge is the amount of one meet's rent (approx. \$20-\$25). Any excess funds that are gained by a club go towards a club games library, but they can also go to other more social efforts such as the club buying pizza for everyone or a social function. The better club library is one that includes game rulebooks and avoids one use items such as modules.



An Essay On How To Re-Use Old Dungeons by Alan Ogden

"Time to pay for your crimes, mage" said Ren, ignoring the twisted sneer spreading across Arkus' face. Harder to ignore was the searing blast of flame that erupted across the chamber. As Ren screamed his pain he could hear the chilling laughter of his enemy as he stood untouched at the centre of the maelstrom.

You've spent hours creating the maps. Hand drawn, lovingly coloured, scaled and keyed. The descriptions detailed and evocative, the complex well thought out and balanced. The denizens hardy and brave, weak and cowardly, all brought to life with painstaking attention to detail. The protagonists with all their plans carefully plotted and planned. And then its all over.

The dungeon you created has been raped and despoiled, its treasures pillaged and its inhabitants slaughtered amidst their broken dreams of world domination. The time has come to lay another adventure to rest. As a game master this is the part I hate the most. I can't stand the thought of all that work only being used once and then going to waste. I always keep my old adventures and NPC's, promising myself that one day, when I have a different set of players, that I'd dust them off and use them again. It never happened. I've never had a group of entirely new players to re-run old adventures with.

In time I came to realise that the only way to re-use an old adventure is to re-work it, taking into account the damage wrought by player characters as part of the new theme. With this in mind, the castle on the hill became the ruins on the hill, the old wizard's tower a place haunted by demons and stranger creatures. In a world where undead and miscast

spells are facts of life, and immortal creatures take interest in the doings of the mortal world such re-working is fairly easy to achieve and justify. Curses uttered on the lips of a dying opponent come true and a new adventure arises from the ashes of the old.

I have done this on a couple of occasions now and the pleasure that my players had going through this encounter was far greater than I had imagined. Seeing area descriptions modified by their actions brought back memories of adventures they had played before and the stories they had told about them. As they reminisced, I remembered details that I had forgotten. A new depth had been added to the game.

The advantages of re-working an adventure are twofold. The first is that much of the work for the adventure has already been done. You already have the map, and the skeleton of the new adventure. The effort required in fleshing out these adventures is considerably less than creating a new adventure from scratch, especially if you keep good notes on your adventures as you play them so that you can readily refer back to them.

To add a few twists I usually allow at least several months (often years) of game time go by before re-running an adventure. I often set up a re-worked dungeon with a couple of dead adventurers as props. These unfortunates have presumably entered the dungeon after your player characters initial onslaught and give you scope to justify new additions or changes to the dungeon, as well as being a useful explanation for memory slips on your part. They can also be used to reveal new sections with dead bodies propping open secret doors never before discovered (because they weren't there!). These unsuccessful adventurers also allow me to introduce items into the adventure, such as magic and treasure, that may otherwise be hard to justify.

Other obvious choices for stocking a re-worked dungeon are various undead, carrion eating creatures and monsters requiring lairs. These creatures will bring some possessions with them which form the basis for new treasures. Other potential occupants may be those seeking a hidden or secret base, such as bandits, spies or

perhaps rebellious peasants. The new occupants may come to the attention of local authorities (and the player characters) through their depredations or may be discovered "accidentally" by locals looking for building materials or small items of value.

As a general rule any traps that were in the original complex will have been bypassed or disarmed. This may lead to complacency on the part of your players, but who is to say that the rusted spike holding up a portcullis hasn't worked loose, or that the new inhabitants haven't come up with a few surprises of their own.

The second advantage is the added pleasure the players (and game master) receive in re-visiting familiar sites. Your campaign gains a depth and continuity it may never have had before and your players get the feeling that they are contributing to the world in which they play.

Re-using old dungeons helps to overcome two problems I often find in my campaigns, "overkill" and "sprawl".

Overkill occurs when the campaign is based around a central area. This area tends to be well thought out and very detailed - it represents a lot of work. Naturally enough, most of your adventures will occur in, around or near this base. The problem is that in time the area will begin to resemble a war zone. So many creatures of darkness will have congregated around the area that it will make you wonder how the city (town, village etc.) ever got established, let alone survived for any length of time. And how to explain the secret temples that have been there for years but until now have never done anything?

Campaign sprawl is something that happens when you try to overcome overkill by having the players travel to new locations to have the adventures in. Unless carefully controlled, the player characters may travel further than you intend. This in turn leads them into uncharted areas of your campaign world. When this starts happening you find yourself having to work harder and harder to provide the same depth of background information you had in the previous locale. As players travel further afield you will either become terribly overworked, or the quality of your campaign world will begin to slip.





Re-using old dungeon plans overcomes these problems. Rather than setting each new adventure in a new locale, the player characters will adventure over the same ground several times. The time you save can be used to develop background for new locales, so that when player characters do choose to move on you're ready for them.

It is not just your old dungeons, castles, and crypts that can be re-used. NPC's can be reintroduced as well. An ongoing feud or nemesis is something that has been used as plot device in numerous novels and TV series, and there is no reason why you can't use this motif yourself. Carefully managed, a recurring NPC will add depth to your adventures and continuity to your campaign.

Of course the NPC in question must survive the original encounter with the player characters before they can become a recurrent theme. A protagonist who escapes in the original adventure, or who is captured alive can be easily reintroduced (e.g. escapes from prison, returns from exile, or seeking revenge). The return of their old enemy - more powerful than ever - forms the basis of a new adventure. Even if killed, an old protagonist can still feature in a re-worked adventure. Just because an NPC was evil in the extreme, it does not mean that their family are not entitled to inherit the lands, goods etc. possessed by their now

deceased relative. With the black sheep of the family out of the way, the next in line will be claiming all his worldly goods. Imagine the reaction of the inheritor when he finds that a bunch of murdering vandals had stripped the place of every valuable item leaving nothing but a decrepit eyesore and a lot of unpaid death duties. Such relatives will be seeking vengeance and become a variation on the recycling theme, providing numerous opportunities for spin-off adventures before resulting in a final climax at the site of the original adventure.

Raising old protagonists from the dead is another thing I have done (though I don't recommend doing it too often). The instant recognition of the bad guy and the collective groans of despair as players realise that they have to take the evil-doer out again are a delight to hear. I have found that after re-introducing a protagonist into a campaign my players will go to extraordinary lengths to ensure they are permanently dead this time.

Divine intervention is a possibility I usually reserve for powerful NPC priests. If a god is embarked on a major temporal endeavour, then it is unlikely that they are going to allow the death of a major component in their plan to stop them for long. The form that the intervention takes may have to be subtle though if the god does not want to alert others to its continued nefarious activities.

The lost body motif is a fairly common one (especially in comics) which presumes the destruction of an opponent but where the body is never recovered (e.g. totally consumed by a retributive strike, knocked off a cliff, drowned). An opponent who reappears after this sort of defeat isn't really being brought back from the dead since they never really died in the first place. The other "come-backs" presume some sort of preparation on the part of the protagonist to ensure their life after death, and that these measures are not discovered and negated.

By employing these ideas and techniques of restoring old dungeon complexes and re-enacting old feuds, you can ease the burden of work on yourself when creating your campaign. This labour saving ploy will give you more time to work on new areas of the campaign world for the players to explore while at the same time adding to campaign depth and the enjoyment of all and sundry. After all, re-cycling's supposed to be good for the environment!

Arkus stood above the battered, bound and bloody figure of the ranger, Ren Meadowvale. Arkus stared about at the blackened, fire seared walls. He remembered the last time he had faced Ren in this room. Five years ago. This time it would be different. This time Ren would die.

The Analytical Engine

BOOK REVIEWS

by Peter Crank

This issue I talk to Dan Simmons, an emerging figure in several speculative fiction genres. His latest offerings present great material for players of Vampire™

Dan Simmons was in Australia in March for the Word Festival at the Australian National University. The festival aimed to promote cross-fertilisation among participants in the literary industry (hmmm, where do I sign up!). Dan Simmons is seen as an ideal spokesperson for this forum as his impressive body of work crosses many traditional genre boundaries. Simmons made his fiction debut with the winning story in the Twilight Zone Magazine short story competition.

His novel length works include: **Song of Kali**, psychological horror with a grim denouement and winner 1986 World Fantasy Award; **Carrion Comfort**, winner 1989 British Fantasy Award, 1990 Bram Stoker Award, 1990 Locus Award - Best Horror novel; **Hyperion**, an epic space opera, 1990 Hugo winner and Locus Award for Best SF novel; **Fall of Hyperion**, 1991 Locus Award; **Phases of Gravity**, semi-mainstream novel of self-discovery; **Summer of Night**, horror; **The Hollow Man**, telepathy can really suck; and 'Children of the Night', vampire meets haematologist.

Children of the Night attempts to explain vampirism as a genetic mutation and a symbiotic relationship with a retro-virus that leaves the 'vampire' dependent on human blood for his continued existence. The vampires are descendants of a single Transylvanian family. The aging patriarch of this bloody clan is none-other than Vlad Tepes, aka Vlad the Impaler, aka Vlad Dracula. Vlad was famous for impaling friends and foe alike on large wooden stakes - Freud would have loved him. Simmons effectively threads historical flashbacks of Vlad's life through 'Children' and they make fascinating reading, as do the accounts of the modern horror that was the Ceaucescu regime.

Vampires of a different breed lurk within the pages of Simmons' **Carrion Comfort**. These creatures look like you or I, but can slide into your brain, brushing your mind aside, to use your body for their own dark ends. Once in their power you commit horrific acts of murder, they feed on the violence, and leave you to face the music. The Jewish Holocaust, serial killers, even wars are the result of this feeding and of bizarre contests between these people. A big book in a best seller style, **Carrion Comfort** is heartily recommended to lovers of non-stop action thrillers. Its violent, as is much of Simmons' work, and Dan doesn't shrink from exploring the dark side of human activity.

The Hollow Man sees Simmons pursuing his favourite theme of humanity's penchant for cruelty and violence to it's own kind. Bremmen is a powerful telepath, the only other telepath he ever encountered is now his wife. His wife helps shield his mind from

the tumult of thoughts spewing from us mere mortals. But she is dying. Bremen's fall from his elitist perch is spectacular and bloody. His encounter with the lady rancher gave me the shivers, the resulting action is graphically (puke) portrayed. Simmons is often painted as a horror novelist - but for my money all three of these books are classifiable as Science Fiction (in the way Stephen King isn't).

Prayers to Broken Stones is a collection of Dan Simmons' shorter fiction. My choice for best stories: 'The River Styx Runs Upstream', the story that launched Dan's career (gave me goose bumps); 'Two Minutes Forty-five Seconds', a blistering attack on the sort of corporate buck-chasing that causes disasters; and 'Metastasis' about what really causes cancer.

Dan was kind enough to take time from his punishing promotional schedule to talk to **Australian Realms** about his work, his peeves, and his sore throat.

Welcome to Australia, Dan. Is this just a quick promotional visit, or for the Word festival itself?

Well it is a quick promotional visit but I don't think I would have done it without being invited to the Word Festival 'cause the idea interested me - of bringing together writers poets, librarians; anyone who is interested in language.

How do you find all the marketing and hype that goes with being a writer these days? Do you resent all that?

I don't resent it, be foolish to resent it, but you know it reaches a point where you have to decide whether or not to do it and I guess I'm getting old enough and slow enough that I'd rather just spend the time working. I arrived Tuesday morning and immediately went to work with interviews after 30 hours of travelling and I think its been pretty solid since. My voice is suffering as a result.

Do your publishers have trouble marketing you because your work tends to cross boundaries?

Right, I think that some of that perception by writers about how strictly they have to stick to genres is self limiting, I mean I know its self-limiting, but I think the writers do it to themselves. There is some problem for my publishers but I have three major publishers now, four counting my limited edition publishers. My science fiction and mainstream fiction is published by Bantam Doubleday Dell, the would-be best seller horror fiction is Putnam and I've just done a deal with Warner books hardcover for a very out of genre book that's coming up called Love Death, five novellas. The things that are very strange appear in limited edition from Lord John Press, which is a rather prestigious little press.

I read a profile of you by Edward Bryant in which he said that Hyperion and Fall of Hyperion had their genesis in a classroom.

Well he's right, I was a teacher for 18 years and while I did teach gifted children part of that time, instead of programmes most of the time which is teaching elementary aged kids, primarily sixth grade, which in the States means 11 year olds, and a couple times over the years I would tell the story that started early in the school year, tell it 20 minutes or 30 minutes a day for about 180, 182 days; that's a long story! And it was an epic set on the planet Garden in some far future with some fantasy, Jack Vance, elements. But when I started writing adult science fiction, science fiction I hoped adults would like, I took some of the elements from this huge tale, including the Shrike, a creature which caught some peoples' imagination, and plugged it in. It rather pleases me that the only people in the world who know the entire story, or ever will really besides me, are these former 11 year olds, many of whom are almost grown-up now.

I find that unusual. Most of the teachers I met in my school career were rather lacking in imagination and the last thing they would have done was spin a tale to us. Do you think that its something within you; something that's driven you to become a writer?

Well I wanted to be a writer when I was a kid. I've always loved listening to stories and telling stories and reading and all

writers are functions of fanatic readers who run out of the best material and want to create some of their own. But with teaching, yeah, I've got an eleven year old daughter right now, we're having trouble finding teachers in the public schools who can serve her; she's smart, she's a better writer than I am, than I was at that age certainly. Actually she's a better writer at age eleven than I was when I got out of high school. Teachers can be pretty lazy, but its wide open, its like writing - you can make it as difficult as you want to, and I used to make it awfully difficult for myself.

You mentioned Jack Vance, was he an influence on your science fiction writing?

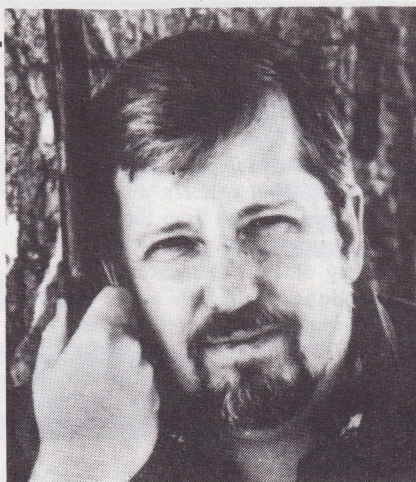
I have to admit he was. I just revelled in Jack Vance when I was a kid. He used his visual sense and his facility with language that made language so convincing, especially place-names and so forth. Certainly part of the Hyperion books was just a nod in the direction of Vance.

I'm curious about 'Children of the Night' and how you came to find yourself in Romania in the first place. Was that research, or was it a holiday?

Well it was research, I don't know too many people who'd take a holiday in Romania. Though I was suggesting it to Steve King that we put together a little package deal to take people to Castle Dracula to have Halloween. I'll pay his way and everyone else can pay for me. But what happened was, its rather a prosaic story I'm afraid, my agent asked me to write a story about Dracula for a Byron Price anthology commemorating something about Dracula and I said no. I had no interest in Dracula. I like original ideas and Dracula had been done to death, pardon the pun. But almost as soon as I hung up when I said no I realised that, this was 1990 and the revelations had been coming out for about six months about the Ceausescu regime and the orphans and the AIDS problem there, and I realised that I really did want to write about that and that Dracula would be the right metaphor. So I did a long story for the anthology and the circumstances turned around so that it was time to write a horror novel and I realised that that was the one I really wanted to create. I hadn't said what I'd wanted to say in the story. So I found myself in the spring of 1991 on the way to Romania with a lot of specific things to research about the historical Vlad Dracula.

The part that struck me the most was, the early chapters which weren't horror at all in the fictional sense; they were real. How did you deal with that, the warehouses full of Aids babies, the inhumanity of that regime?

It bothered me. I didn't see the actual warehouses because they'd been [emptied]



by late 1991, but that was the impetus to go over and take a look. It bothered me when leather jacketed ex-security thugs tried to sell me and my sister-in-law babies. I travelled with my sister-in-law who is German; she was over in Europe but she speaks German and our theory was that we could speak to people in Transylvanian German; and it worked. We didn't have to rely on guides and so forth, but we looked like a nice young naive American couple over there to buy a baby, and we had plenty of offers.

And there were plenty of naive young Americans over there buying babies?

Yeah. I shouldn't be cynical because they went over there to help and they found out that they couldn't adopt AIDS babies, hepatitis babies, dying babies, because the American embassy wouldn't allow them to bring them back. So they'd end up wanting to help somehow, so they were just, many of them, fodder for these greasy thugs who took them out to villages and apartment complexes and sold the baby out of it's bed. And they weren't starving children, they were just a family's way to make quite a bit of money.

Did you feel at any time that these issues were in danger of taking over your novel? That they were bigger than the story?

Well I know they're bigger than the story but for me the danger is trivialising the actual events by even including them in the novel. But I felt there was a certain balance with the strength of the historical Vlad Dracula and I guess the speed of the story itself. I rarely abandon a story line to go off and preach. I don't write books to preach. I know there is a teacher in me, but I don't preach. I like to share the information as best I find it, but I put it in a good story.

Are you writing anything at the moment?

Well, I'm always writing, or preparing to write it. I've just finished a project that I'm very excited about, which every writer says about every project probably. But this really was difficult for me and it was rather a new experience. Its a thing called **Love Death**, which is five novellas on the theme of love and death

and how intricately choreographed the two are. It starts off with the novella I wrote some time ago called **Entropy's Bed at Midnight**, but the other four novellas look at other facets of the same situations.

How would you categorise the new stories? Are you doing your usual cross-genre writing?

I am. But one of the stories called **Flashback**, about a drug. [Its] set in the very near future when most Americans are taking a drug called flashback to relive parts of their lives. The whole country is eventually trying to relive past glories. **Flashback** has that science fiction element, that gimmick. One that will appear in Playboy in May **Dying in Bangkok**, is possibly, no it is, the most horrific single thing I've ever written. So there's horror, there's science fiction, but the nice part of this collection is it really is a multi-faceted thing, or hologram - you can hold up and rotate in the light and you see things from different angles; so each different genre, or approach, serves a different purpose in this. It was so important for me to get the balance right, to just place it right.

Do you think there is a trend to more graphic violence and horror in writing today? Do you think that its a trend forced by the graphic nature of movies these days?

Well, maybe. I don't care for the graphic movies and I don't care for the graphic splatter type violence. When I say horrific, there are graphic elements in the story but I mean more of what moves me in terms of horrific. It returns to the AIDS epidemic, but as for Bangkok and what's happening there, or will happen in the next few years. **Dying in Bangkok** will probably be my last riff on the vampire theme, certainly for many years. Its really going out with a bang so to speak.

Vampires really are the undead of the entertainment industry aren't they? Why do you think they remain so popular?

Once you've forged an archetype, unless the thing fades from relevance, the thing will keep appearing because it is infinitely malleable, one can redefine the vampire myth for every generation, and every generation's set of anxieties and I suspect there's this new idea of the sanctity of blood that AIDS has created that's making vampires popular now.

What do you think about violence in entertainment? What's the difference between art and social comment and pornographic displays of violence?

Actually the kind of violence that's so common now on my cable TV is pornography to me. I'm not interested in censoring pornography to tell you the

truth. I just wish that, at least in the United States, we'd pull up our socks, grow up a little bit and have a consensus of value that didn't lean so heavily towards the idiotically graphic stuff. I feel like American movies took a wrong turn in the last 15 years, and I can almost place the moment. Its when the camera quit staying on the victim, so the viewer hoped the victim got out; now the camera is the subjective angle of the killer and the question is how is this next person going to die? What new way can we invent to open up this sack of guts and let the insides out, and that's boring stuff to me.

So you see no place for censorship? Should a book like 'American Psycho' be censored?

No, I don't think any book should be censored. I just don't. There is garbage everywhere and people wallowing in it; but if people want to wallow in it, let them wallow. **American Psycho** I can't comment on because I haven't read it. I do think that the outcry and shock is overdone because of who the writer is. Edward Bryant reviewed **American Psycho** for Locus magazine and I liked his review. He pointed out that its much less graphic than a lot of stuff in the genre, the splatter punk stuff. Its just a writer they didn't expect to write it.

Violence to children seems to be a feature of your work. Why?

Its kind of a despicable thing, to involve children in a book seems one step away from the movies I deplore. I tend to write about things that concern me the most. The one great image from Stephen King that scares me is the lumber truck in the beginning of **Pet Cemetery**, both the book and the movie, with a two year old toddler wandering around the yard with these trucks roaring by. That's the most scary scene I could imagine, but the rest of the movie was silly, and the book was silly. King and I discussed this and we can't get over that fear.

Where do you go from here Dan? You've achieved some measure of success. Do you worry about what comes next?

No. I mean, career-wise you'd be foolish to do that. I worry about retaining the freedom I have to write more or less what I want to write. I worry about things like energy and mortality in terms of not getting through the immediate list of projects. But in terms of career you can't do much but try to preserve your freedom and a certain amount of integrity. In terms of what comes next, one of the problems is of course you've signed away your life for a couple of years by

agreeing to do certain books and by the time that you're ready to start it you've sort of grown cold. So I'm fighting that syndrome right now.

I'd like to thank you for giving Australian Realms your time Dan. I suggest you find some fine Aussie beer to wet your tired vocal cords!

You know, you are the first person to suggest that to me and I sort of expected to have a beer immediately upon landing in the morning, and I haven't seen anybody drinking beer here!

Thanks Dan for all the great reading and keep up the good work!

Well thanks, I've really enjoyed the interview.

I don't know if Dan ever got his beer, he's obviously mixing with the wrong sort of people. The engine is whining to stop and I'm off to lubricate my own tonsils. Stay tuned, though, because the next victim for the Engine is Terry Pratchett. Terry was in Perth for the National SF convention at Easter. I caught up with him at Observation City Hotel where we shared a few drinks and Terry offered some interesting insights into the Disk World. See you then. ■



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READERS POLL



What types of games do you play? (tick)

- ☐ Fantasy RPG's ☐ Sci-Fi RPG's
☐ Play-By-Mail ☐ Cyberpunk RPG's
☐ Live Role Play ☐ Tabletop
☐ Horror RPG's ☐ Other _____

What specific games do you play and want to see in future issues of **Realms**?

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

Which issues of **Realms** do you own? (tick)

- 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐
 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐

Which issue was best? ____ Why? _____

How many people read your copy of **Realms**? _____

Rate the columns that appear in this issue.

	Excellent	Good	Indifferent	Bad	Appalling
Reviews	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Monster Gallery	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Letters Page	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Analytical Engine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Dice Are Dead	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mechwarrior Brewer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
News	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The A-Team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do you prefer the 'Adventures of the A-Team' as a comic or as text? (tick)
 comic ☐ text ☐

Would you like to see an **A-Team** book released, including both text and comics of unpublished storylines?
 yes ☐ no ☐

Have you taken advantage of any of the PBM inserts in the magazine?
 yes ☐ no ☐

What fantasy campaign world/s do you use?

- ☐ Greyhawk ☐ Warhammer ☐ Ærth
☐ Ravenloft ☐ Spelljammer ☐ Al-Qadim
☐ Dark Sun ☐ Glorantha ☐ Your Own
☐ Unae ☐ Forgotten Realms
☐ Mythic Europe

Have you used any of the scenarios printed?
 no ☐ yes ☐ if yes, which ones? _____

What kind of scenarios do you want printed?
 none ☐ outdoor ☐ city ☐ dungeon ☐

Are you using the **Unae** material?
 yes ☐ no ☐

Do you want us to continue publishing **Unae** material?
 yes ☐ don't care ☐ no ☐

Would you buy an **Unae** world book or module if it was \$25 for 80+ pages?
 yes ☐ have to see it ☐ no ☐

What direction do you want to see **Unae** take? _____

Name _____
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Please rate the articles of past issues listed below. If you didn't get an issue or you didn't read the article please leave it blank (score 0-10, 10=excellent & 0=appalling).

Issue	Article Name	Score
6	Wild at Heart	___
6	From the Cockpit	___
6	A Guide to Narnia	___
6	Shadowrun Australia, part I	___
6	Buckets of Blood	___
7	That's My Boy	___
7	Niven & Barnes Interview	___
7	Shadowrun Australia, part II	___
7	Orcs of Unae	___
7	Sea Elves in WFRP	___
7	The Monastery	___
7	Psykers (part II)	___
8	The Forest	___
8	Greg Stafford	___
8	RuneQuest Tips	___
8	Shadowrun Australia, part III	___
8	Thinking Man's Monster	___
8	Pure at Heart	___
8	WH 40,000 Role Play	___
8	Dire Bollockal	___
8	The Ultimate Dream Park	___
9	Death in Thvatta	___
9	Gary Gyax Interview	___
9	Shadowrun Australia, part IV	___
9	Deep Dark Dungeons	___
9	WH40KRP part II	___
9	Branches of Blood	___
9	Woad for Warriors	___
9	The Dreaming Streets	___
10	Tessa-Winds of Change	___
10	Good Fellows All	___
10	Hitting The Hardcore	___
10	Femme Fatales	___
10	Lip Service	___
10	Partying Under The Sun	___
10	Love Will Tear Us Apart	___
10	'X' Marks the Spot	___
10	Sudden Death Battletech	___
10	Urban Mechs	___
11	Tessa II-Gold Rush	___
11	Blood Circle	___
11	Shadowrun Australia, part V	___
11	Clubb'n'	___
11	Bedlam	___
11	The Kramer Confederation	___
11	Curse of Aot	___
11	Raising the Stones	___
11	Dan Simmons Interview	___

WIN!

Everybody who takes the time to send in their completed Readers Poll form will be in the running to win these prizes!

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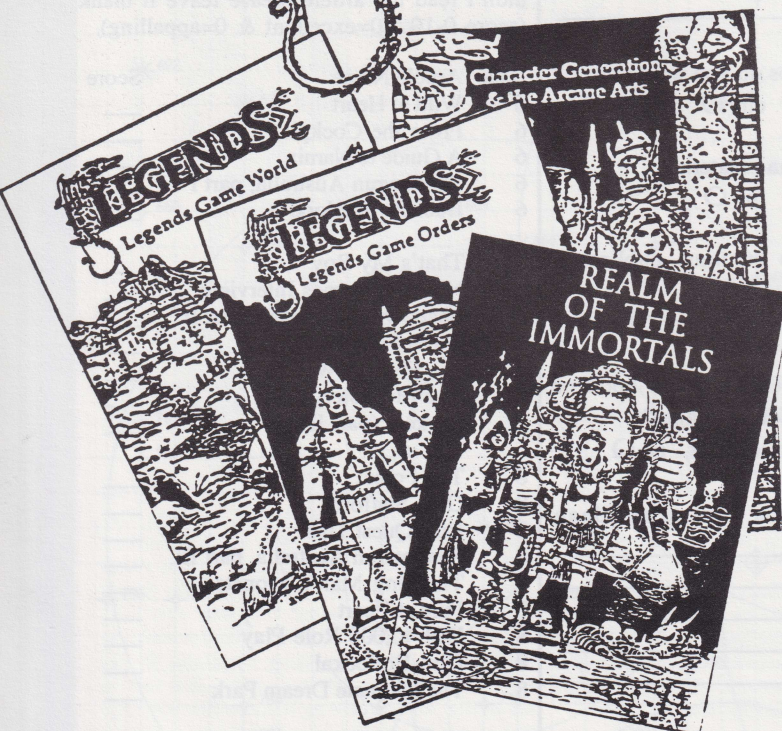
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Thank you very much for *your* contribution towards *your* magazine. Feel free to send any other opinions you haven't yet expressed to us attached to the Poll on a separate page.

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Call Signs

All the units in Clan formations have individual call-signs which instantly identify the unit's place in the Cluster. The formula for this call-sign is expressed in the following order: "Cluster Prefix" "Trinary Letter" "Star Number" "Point Number". An example of a call-sign would be "Saber Alpha two-two". This identifies the units as being in Alpha Trinary, Second Star, Point Two. The Cluster Prefix (in this example "Saber") changes every 6 hours to confuse the enemy should they penetrate the secure communications net. The Cluster Prefix can be omitted for communications within the Cluster. In that case the above call-sign would be shortened to "Alpha two-two".

Note: Command units always end in "six" (don't ask me why, I only report it!). "Saber Alpha two-six" would be the commander of the Second Star, Alpha Trinary. Higher command units have even smaller call-signs. Trinary HQ units have no Star number, (the other Stars of the Trinary are number 1 through 3), and the Cluster HQ has no Trinary or Star number. For example, "Saber Alpha two" would identify a point in the Trinary HQ Star. "Saber Alpha six" is the call-sign of the Alpha Trinary commander, and "Saver six" is the Cluster commander's call-sign. Other units of a Star take the number 1 through 4, depending on their place in the Star. The chart below shows the call-signs more effectively:

Trinary HQ:

Alpha Six	Commander, Alpha Trinary
Alpha one	Alpha Trinary HQ Star Point
Alpha two	Alpha Trinary HQ Star Point
Alpha three	Alpha Trinary HQ Star Point
Alpha four	Alpha Trinary HQ Star Point

First Star, Alpha Trinary:

Alpha one-six	Commander, 1st Star, Alpha Trinary
Alpha one-one	1st Star, Alpha Trinary, Point
Alpha one-two	1st Star, Alpha Trinary, Point
Alpha one-three	1st Star, Alpha Trinary, Point
Alpha one-four	1st Star, Alpha Trinary, Point

Second Star, Bravo Trinary

Bravo two-six	Commander, 2nd Star, Bravo Trinary
Bravo two-one	1st Star, Bravo Trinary, Point
Bravo two-two	1st Star, Bravo Trinary, Point
Bravo two-three	1st Star, Bravo Trinary, Point
Bravo two-four	1st Star, Bravo Trinary, Point

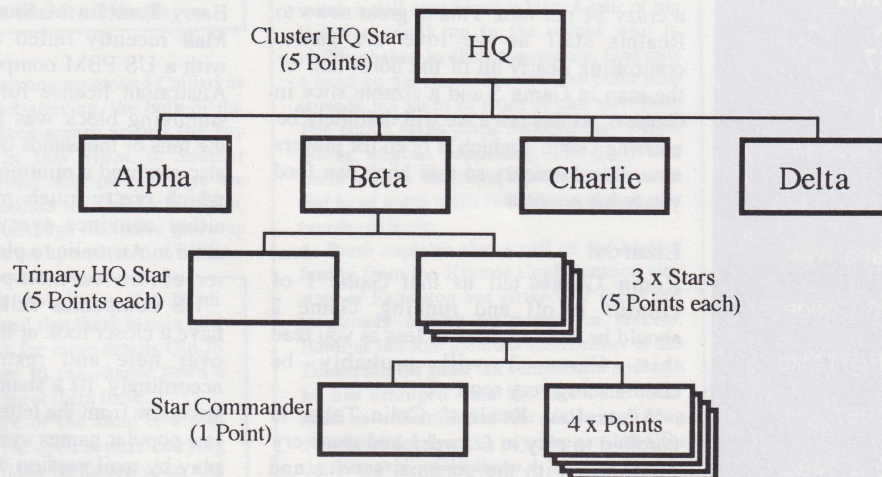
Call Protocol:

When calling another station on the Cluster communications net, there are some simple rules. Always use the call-sign of the unit you want to talk to first, then identify yourself as the caller. The comms net is usually very busy, and it's easier if you are just listening out for your call-sign rather than having to listen carefully to details of the conversations on the net to see if they concern you.

Flash Traffic:

When you have an emergency message to pass, and you want to get someone's attention immediately, you can make a flash traffic call. After you have called the unit you want and identified yourself, then you call "Flash Traffic". For example, "Saber Alpha six, this is Bravo six, *Flash Traffic, Flash Traffic!*". Warning - do not use a flash traffic call to let someone know you're out of Autocannon ammunition, or something equally trivial. If it is not a message as important as, say, the arrival of a large contingent of unexpected enemy reinforcements, or some other major disaster, you will get chewed-out royally by your Trinary commander.

Cluster Organisation



The diagram shows the organisation of a Cluster composed of 4 Trinaries. Each Trinary has a Trinary Command Star and Three Stars of 5 Points. Any Special Support Points (like Artillery 'Mechs, or special Aerospace support) would be located in the Trinary HQ Star. A useful addition to any Trinary is a couple of Points of Artillery vehicles with Arrow IV, a Point of re-supply vehicles, and a Spotter 'Mech fitted with TAG all in the HQ Star.

Dice Are Dead



*Play-By-Mail &
Live Role Playing
Column compiled
by Nick Leaning*

Submissions To:

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Dice Are Dead
2/85 Union Road
Surrey Hills
Victoria 3127

Companies mentioned:

Athena's Avatar, PO Box 3534,
Weston Creek, ACT 2611
Australian Wizard, PO Box 1171,
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Dynamic Games, 4 Tarana Ave,
Kanaooka NSW 2530
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Toowoomba QLD 4350
Sandgroper PBM, PO Box 1484,
Midland, WA 6056
Victorian Diplomacy Club, PO
Box 1229, Box Hill, VIC 3128

Due to Glenn's other writing commitments this issue (see *The Kramer Confederation* on pages 26 to 29) Nick Leaning has taken the helm for *Dice Are Dead*. Glenn will return in issue 12 with a review of Zone 3's Laser Game.

Play-By-Mail

Apology to Australian Wizard

Last issue we mistakenly attributed the release of *Postal American Football League* to Roma Games. This new game simulating a season of grid iron all the way to the Super Bowl is in fact offered by one of Australia's longest running PBM company's - Australian Wizard. AustWiz started in 1983, launching *Spiral Arm I* at CanCon 1984 to immediate success. Since then they have introduced the following games to Australia - *Kingdom*, *Spiral Arm II*, *Continental Rails*, *Realms of Fantasy*, *PAFL*, *Galaxy* and *El Mythico*.

AustWiz are currently developing a new version of *El Mythico* (scenario Balkania), debugging the new *Worlds in Conflict*, and are thinking about designing another new game. The proprietors (Graham Rawlins, a professional programmer, and Kevin Flynn, a public servant and part-time programmer) have licensed their games to New Zealand, USA, England, Germany, Austria, France and Netherlands; in this regard by far the most successful of Aussie PBMs.

Galaxy is their latest release, utilising a HP4 laser printer. It has been relatively slow to launch as AustWiz have been reluctant to push it hard until they had ironed out all the bugs and made a few adjustments after initial play test to balance the game. Now it is ready to commence, and anyone interested should check out the ad on page 8 of this issue.

Isles of Crowns - \$1 A Turn!

Peter Read (Dynamic Games) recently announced he has dropped the price of his island conquest game - *Isle of Crowns* - to a crazy \$1 per turn. This is great news to Realms staff as we love the game, controlling nearly all of the north half of the map in Game 5 and a sizable slice in Game 6. At this price we will definitely be entering Game 7 which is open for players now. Enrol quickly so that Nick can feed you to his pet orcs.

Lizards!

Roma Games tell us that Game 1 of *Lizards!* is off and running. Game 2 should be starting more or less as you read this, Game 3 will probably be commencing very soon.

Australian Realms' Colin Taber is enrolled to play in *Lizards!* and was very impressed with the personal service and the rulebook which he says is worth every bit of the \$5 startup fee in itself. See this issue's insert for more information on this New Zealand designed game.

Twelve Swords of Kameraia

A rarity in these times of computers squatting on everyone's kitchen table is the fully hand-moderated Play By Mail game. Computer moderation does make turn around quicker and rules interpretations more reliable, but some of us miss the creativity of hand moderated games where a human, not a machine writes an imaginative reply to your orders.

Hoping to fill this void in the current market is Nick Argall of *Athena's Avatar*. He and Clem Coleman have written a game based in a semi-fictional realm of Kameraia (I believe the Australian Army also use this name to describe their fictional opponents in some of their war games). *Twelve Swords of Kameraia* plunges you into contemporary history of the Asia-Pacific region. Kameraia is a destabilised society. There is little sense of common national purpose. There are the rich and the poor, the powerful, the greedy, the generous and the weak, the mystics and the ruthless; plus the resources and local and foreign interests in them.

The game's tidy rule book, ring bound A4, laser printed, invites you to invent your own character, no limits, the choice is yours. The book basically sets out the history of this fictional island domain of 19 million people situated north of Papua New Guinea and gives a rundown of current political, geographic and economic makeup of the country. Players write to the game masters each month detailing their thoughts, plans and hopes and wait to receive an extensive report on developments arising out of their orders and that of the other players.

Nick Argall explains that each player's turn receives up to a 2000 word reply; as much as 5 hours work from the games master (moderator). And some players reckon that the month they have to write their next orders is tight. All this, and the fact that this is one game where what the players decide really shapes the direction of the game justifies the relatively high cost of \$20.00 per turn.

Battletech PBM

Barry Tamblin of *Sandgroper Play By Mail* recently failed in his negotiations with a US PBM company to purchase the Australian license for *Battletech*. The stumbling block was the asking price, in the tens of thousands of dollars, the license also required a minimum monthly turnover which pretty much meant Barry had to either convince every man, woman and child in Australia to play, or else charge the sort of turn fees most people pay in rent!

US companies selling PBMs need to have a closer look at the size of the market over here and restructure their price accordingly. Its a shame really, because as we know from the letters we get, *Battletech* is a popular games system and I'm sure the play by mail version would attract a lot of players. In the meantime, *Sandgroper* continue to run *Spiral Arm* out of WA and look for other games to add to their portfolio.

Adventurer Kings

Roma Games

Reviewed by James Chao

Adventurer Kings is a mediaeval fantasy game of conquest in the struggle to be crowned World Emperor at game end. It is a deceptively simple game, but a real challenge to win. The normal game is played on a hex map of 162 provinces with roughly 10 *Adventurer Kings* (players). Play usually lasts around 15 or so turns, and the rankings can change turn to turn reflecting the shifting fortunes of war and adventure.

Players begin by designing a King or Queen character selecting race, alignment, temper (ie. how brave your ruler is) and allocating of four skill points between martial, magical and special abilities - each of these skill area have five sub-areas. Martial skills, for example, are tactics, march, naval, archery and melee. Some skills assist the ruler when leading armies in mass combat situation whilst others apply to one on one encounters; when exploring dungeons for example. Rulers begin with a bonus extra three points in archery, melee and sage to reflect their "royal training". The computer which moderates the game randomly allocates two heroes as henchmen each with one of more starting abilities.

Once you have your ruler and heroes and starting position with map showing current location and surrounding hexes, there are 18 order types that can be given to each character under your control in any of the five phases which make up each game turn. The more characters you control (you can recruit during the game), the more orders

you can give, the more you can achieve in a turn and the greater chance of winning the game.

The game is interesting in that it combines conquest with exploration and adventure. Whilst your best generals are marshalling their forces (there are 19 army types to recruit from including legions, chariots, dragons, whales and werebeasts) trying to take neighbouring provinces and raising your tax base, some of your other characters can explore the 'dungeon' features of the game, defeating monsters, looting treasures, stealing magical devices, and accepting quests. Other options include spying, sage research (trying to develop super weapons and other useful items), and diplomacy - negotiating and backstabbing other players!

Knowing what the game does is not the same as knowing how to play it well. There are so many different combinations of orders that can be done in a single turn that I have not heard of a single disgruntled player, and many players return for rematches. There is even a book you can purchase to whet your palate on; *The Flagship Guide to Adventurer Kings* includes designer notes, an entire game diarised and hints and tips scattered throughout.

There are two variants to basic AK. The European offering lets you control a position on a map roughly corresponding to the European mainland of the late Holy Roman Empire, although historians and cartographers will probably have heart seizures. A Super-AK version of the game accommodates 20-40 positions; played on a larger map with lots more monsters and two new alignments (Divine and Undead) this

variant is probably not for the novice as lots of veterans are present.

Roma Games' latest pricing is setup and rulebook \$10; per turn flat rate \$6; full game fee \$80; guide book \$4. As a beginning player try the per turn option as who knows what might happen. More experienced players save money with the full game option. *Adventurer Kings* is one of the best popular PBMs running in Australia. I look forward to meeting you on the field or battle or at the table of allies.

Diplomacy by Mail

Diplomacy is a highly popular board game of scheming, conniving, double-dealing, back-stabbing and manoeuvre which almost brought the end to my friendship with Andrew Daniels one boozy Boxing Day several years ago... but that's another story.

Apparently there is a thriving community of Diplomacy PBMs - non-profit games run by clubs and players around Australia. **The Victorian Diplomacy Club** were involved with Conquest over the Easter weekend, and ran a tournament there. Now I hear there is also a Queensland group, called, obviously enough - **Q*Dip**. Among other things, the club runs a 20 page fanzine called **Popular Cutlery** which covers all their currently running Diplomacy games and something called **Footbrawl** which sound like heaps of fun. If you want to get involved and live in Queensland (or anywhere for that matter as the fanzine has subscribers as far afield as Germany and USA) simply contact the editors Adrian and Paul Appleyard (07) 841 2742.

On-Line Gaming

Another diceless phenomenon in gaming which thrives in Australia is On-Line Gaming, that is, role playing via modem. Computer owners can log in to a local bulletin board and enter the gaming section of the board to begin play in a role playing game told in episodes by the game master and his players.

One board which offers this service in WA is **Future Reality BBS**. Future Reality started in October 1991 on a system called Remote Access which unfortunately could not support the dungeon system the operators wanted to run. So they changed to Maximus and introduced their "dungeons" area in February '92. Finally, in September '92 they made a change to Ezycom which they have found really suits their needs. The "Dungeons" as they are called are played replicating any role playing games system which the gamesmaster chooses to run (I'm not sure whether this incurs copyright infringement).

The aims of the board are to promote role-playing in general, as well as providing a "user-friendly" BBS and social group (the members often meet for social evenings). Future Reality BBS' number is (09) 350 6249 and supports all speeds from 300 baud up to 9600.

That didn't hurt too much did it? Anyway, Glenn will return next issue. ■





FINALLY, THEY SAW THEIR CHANCE.



QUESTS END!

AT LAST, SOME GOOPIES!

CRREEEEEEKKK



BLOODY HELL!

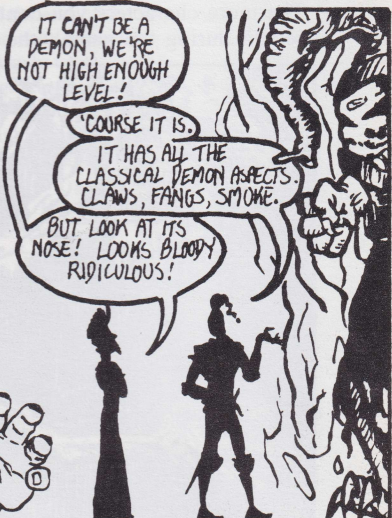
A DEMON!



ERM...

I THINK I'VE JUST BEEN HIT WITH A FEAR SPELL. SORRY, GUYS.

I'M OFF.



IT CAN'T BE A DEMON, WE'RE NOT HIGH ENOUGH LEVEL!

COURSE IT IS.

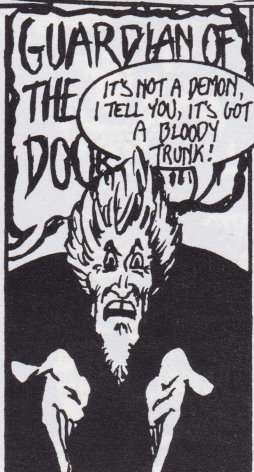
IT HAS ALL THE CLASSICAL DEMON ASPECTS. CLAWS, FANGS, SMOKE.

BUT LOOK AT ITS NOSE! LOOKS BLOODY RIDICULOUS!



I AM GARAXUS!
I AM THE
THERE!

VIRGIL'S RIGHT. IT'S GOT A DEMON NAME. THERE'S AN X IN IT.



GUARDIAN OF THE DOOR
IT'S NOT A DEMON, I TELL YOU, IT'S GOT A BLOODY TRUNK!



NONE MAY PASS WITHOUT
WELL, THEN, SMART ARSE. WHAT IS IT?



THE OF
WELL, IT'S OBVIOUS. ONE OF THEM TOLKIENY THINGS.

THERE, PAGE 154. IT'S AN OLIPHANT!



NEWS

AD&D Games Tournament

The Round Table LRP group has recently formed The AD&D Games Society and have organised a gaming tournament sponsored by TSR UK to the tune of \$1000.00 worth of prizes. The tournament is set to happen over the last weekend in June 1993 and will be held at Cryall Castle in Ballarat. The tournament will be run using published TSR modules altered so that players cannot benefit from having played them before. Tournament organiser, Scott Walker tells us that they are also planning a similar event to take place in Queensland around August time. For further information contact Scott on (071) 565 128.

South Australian Games Convention

Another event inaugurated this year is the SA Games Convention. Due to take place mid-June at Adelaide High School, the event is jointly sponsored by **Dragon's Lair** and **Tactics Adelaide**. Convention organisers expect a big turn out; for more information drop into either of the shops.

Arena Games

Perth's war-gaming and rpg convention will again take place at the Subiaco Police & Citizen Hall in July. New this year is the use of independent referees for the rpg sections which should encourage all-comers to participate. Contact for Arena Games is Mike Ward (09) 417 5446.

FASA Corporation

New for Battletech is a scenario pack which follows the events of the *Blood of Heroes* novel (due out in June). Called the *Day of Heroes*, the scenario pack details the battle for Glengary, giving players all the information they need to recreate the battles fought in the Skye March Rebellion. Also coming up are the *Battletech Recognition*

Cards, each featuring full-colour paintings of 'Mechs and the information needed for using those 'Mechs in **Battletech** or **Mechwarrior** scenarios. And for Shadowrun there's *A Killing Glare* an adventure written by Lou Prosperi set in the glittering world of professional sports; Urban Brawl, the sport of heroes. Another **Shadowrun** novel coming up is *Stryper Assassin* continuing Nyx Smith's story of the Stryper character from the *Into the Shadows* anthology.

Next issue *Australian Realms*, as part of our plans to make #12 a 'cyberpunk' special, will be interviewing FASA's Tom Dowd co-creator of **Shadowrun**. Tom will also be writing a **Shadowrun** article for us as soon as he returns from his trip to France where he is Guest of Honour at a convention.

R.Talsorian Games

When invited to participate in our 'cyberpunk' special, Mike Pondsmith (creator of their *Cyberpunk* rpg) had to pass up the pleasure. In his wife, Lisa's own words, "The production staff are so booked here that I cannot get them to do anything that is not product. Michael is the very worst. As he is writing *Cybergeneration*, our expansion of *Cyberpunk* for in July, and all of *Castle Falkenstein*, the new fantasy game due in August, I have to put in a reservation just to eat dinner with him."

Another release due out for RTG's **Cyberpunk** game is *Maximum Metal* which covers military equipment, mil-spec vehicles and powered armours. And for the **Dream Park** fans, look out for *The "Race for El Dorado" Game* a pure thirties jungle pulp adventure with a prehistoric twist.

Mistaken Identity

It has been brought to our attention that some people are telling our readers *Australian Realms* is an American product,

and have used this as an excuse to charge you an extra dollar on the cover price. Please be assured that **Australian Realms** is wholly Australian owned, produced in Australia and printed here.

White Wolf

Due out in May is *The Players Guide to Werewolf* and the 2nd Edition hardback *The Players Guide to Vampire*. Also to be released is an anthology of **Werewolf** short stories, titled *Drums Around the Fire* it is due out in June. Interesting news is that someone in the US is setting up a Vampires fanclub under a White Wolf license called *The Camarilla*. The club is for people with a fascination for vampires in general, but obviously White Wolf's games will be part of their focus. The club will be setting up chapters in various places so if you'd like to be a part of this latest development in the 90's Vampire Boom write to:

The Camarilla
8314 Greenwood Ave North
Box 2850
Seattle Washington 98013 USA

TSR

The AD&D 2nd Edition will be well served by many new releases in the coming weeks - **The New Monstrous Manual**; **2nd Edition Forgotten Realms** (why release second edition of a campaign world is anybody's guess); **Complete Gladiators Handbook** for Dark Sun; **Al-Qadim City of Delights** boxed set looks really good; and **The Ivory Triangle** boxed set for Dark Sun.

Errata

Jedko Games pointed out an error in last issue's review of **Battletech 3rd Edition**. Ron suggested the plastic figures were smaller than the **Ral Partha** metals. This is not correct - in fact the plastic miniatures are cast from moulds taken off the Ral Partha figures. Sorry about that; Ron has been kicked by a Wolverine so he won't make that mistake again!

Final Words

Its a... we don't know, 'cos the baby hasn't arrived yet!

...See ya 'round like a d100!

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